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REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report covers the period from the second regular session of 1989 of the Economic and Social Council to the second regular session of 1990. During the first half of 1990, four of the five regional commissions held their regular sessions. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) held its forty-fifth session in Geneva from 18 to 27 April 1990; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held its forty-sixth session in Bangkok from 4 to 13 June 1990; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean held its twenty-third session in Caracas from 3 to 11 May 1990; and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) held the twenty-fifth session of the Commission and the 16th meeting of the Conference of Ministers in Tripoli from 15 to 19 May 1990 and the eleventh meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole from 5 to 12 May 1990. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) does not meet in 1990, in accordance with its resolution 158 (XIV), in which the Commission decided that its sessions would normally be held biennially.

Until 1983, the report of the Secretary-General on regional co-operation included a section on major economic and social developments within the regions. Since similar information has been made available to the Council in the summaries of the surveys of the five regions, it was decided to exclude that section from the report on regional co-operation (see "Summary of the economic survey of Europe, 1989-1990" (E/1990/51), "Summary of the economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1989" (E/1990/52), "Summary of the economic survey of Latin America and

* E/1990/92.

the Caribbean, 1989" (E/1990/54), "Summary of the survey of economic and social conditions in Africa, 1989-1990" (E/1990/53), and "Summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 1989" (E/1990/56)).

The present report contains five sections: section I.A deals with issues calling for action by the Economic and Social Council and section I.B with issues brought to its attention; section II highlights the work of the regional commissions; section III reports on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions held during the year; section IV contains a draft proposal formulated by the regional commissions for interregional co-operation in the area of trade facilitation, pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 1989/118; section V reports on the status of implementation by the regional commissions of interregional co-operation in the monitoring and assessment of traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes in each region, as requested by General Assembly resolution 44/226. Sections IV and V are subjects on interregional co-operation selected by the Council at its organizational session, upon the joint recommendation of the executive secretaries, for in-depth consideration under the agenda item on regional co-operation.

The annual reports of ECE, ESCAP, ECLAC and ECA will provide further background information on the matters dealt with in the present report; the report of ECE on its forty-fifth session will be issued as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 12 (E/1990/41); the report of ESCAP on its forty-sixth session as ibid., Supplement No. 11 (E/1990/40); the report of ECLAC on its twenty-third session as ibid., Supplement No. 14 (E/1990/43); and the report of ECA on the 16th meeting of the Conference of Ministers and on the twenty-fifth session of the Commission as ibid., Supplement No. 13 (E/1990/42).

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* Information relating to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific will be issued in an addendum to the present report.

I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Matters calling for action by the Council

1. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. During its twenty-third session, on the 10th of May 1990, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) adopted resolution 504 (XXIII) on the admission of Italy as a member of ECLAC. The resolution welcomed the application of Italy and recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it approve the admission of Italy as a member of the Commission and authorize the amendment of paragraph 3 (a) of the Terms of Reference of the Commission by the insertion of the word "Italy" between the word "France" and the words "the Netherlands" in that paragraph.

2. During that same session, the Commission received an offer from the Government of Chile to host the twenty-fourth session of ECLAC in that country, in 1992. On 11 May 1990, the Commission adopted resolution 517 (XXIII) by which it accepted that invitation and recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it approve the holding of the twenty-fourth session in Chile.

2. Economic Commission for Africa

3. At its sixteenth meeting held in Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 15 to 19 May 1990, the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa, responsible for economic development and planning, unanimously adopted the following resolutions for action by the Economic and Social Council:

680 (XXV) The future of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling resolution 669 (XXIV) of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa on the future funding of the activities of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning,

Recalling the Special Memorandum of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning,

Considering the outstanding record of the Institute in the training of African planners and development specialists,

Further considering the continuing and growing need of African Governments for the services of the Institute in the fields of training, research and advisory services,

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Considering also the possibility that the United Nations Development Programme may withdraw its financing of the Institute at the end of 1990 and that the Institute is the only regional institute able to provide training and research services to all the member States of the Commission in the area of economic development and planning,

Noting with great distress that the persistent and substantial shortfall in member States' contributions to the Institute will inevitably force its closure this year if no remedial action is taken,

1. Urgently appeals to the member States of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning to:

(a) Immediately pay to the Institute their contributions for 1990 and their arrears for 1989;

(b) Pay back to the Institute all their remaining arrears according to a schedule to be arranged with the management of the Institute;

(c) Pay their regular annual contribution to the Institute in a timely manner under arrangements to be determined with the management of the Institute;

2. Calls upon the General Assembly, as a matter of urgency, to approve the inclusion of four key posts for the Institute in the United Nations regular budget, namely, the Director, the Chief of Administration and Finance and two senior lecturers, in line with the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1985/62 of 26 July 1985, to enable the Institute to carry out its approved work programme and functions on a continued and sustained basis as stipulated in its Statute;

3. Appeals to the United Nations Development Programme to help the Institute to survive its present financial crisis and, in particular, to:

(a) Quickly set up the evaluation mission announced in October 1989;

(b) Give its full backing to the short-term training programme and to the research and advisory activities of the Institute;

(c) Continue its support to the activities of the Institute in 1990 and beyond;

4. Commends the Governing Council of the Institute on the decisions taken to rationalize the use of resources and urges the management of the Institute to persevere in that endeavour.

693 (XXV) Proposal for interregional co-operation in the area of trade facilitation, and in particular the phased application of Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT) whenever appropriate

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1989/118 of 28 July 1989 on interregional co-operation for facilitation of the international trade in which it called upon regional commissions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to jointly prepare a project proposal in this field,

Recognizing that African countries need to co-operate effectively with the rest of the world and to participate in international trade facilitation, including the use of electronic data interchange for transmission of trade documentation,

Conscious of the urgent need in Africa to build up, strengthen and upgrade capacities to identify problems and requirements for facilitation of international and intra-African trade, including the analysis of practices, procedures, laws, regulations, policies and documentation governing international trade and that such capacity building would benefit government ministries and departments concerned with planning, trade, transport, customs administration, statistics and data processing,

1. Decides to fully support the project proposal on interregional co-operation for facilitation of international trade prepared jointly by the regional commissions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;

2. Endorses the proposal and recommends it for funding by donors;

3. Invites all Member States of the United Nations to support this project proposal;

4. Requests the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the regional development banks and bilateral donors to provide adequate financing to ensure the full realization of this project;

5. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to report to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on the implementation of the present resolution.

698 (XXV) Final review and appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 43/27 of 18 November 1988 in which the Assembly decided that the final review and appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 should be conducted at its forty-sixth session,

Noting with appreciation the two reports by the Economic Commission for Africa secretariat on the progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action 1/ and on the preparations for the final review and evaluation of the Programme of Action, 2/

Noting further with appreciation the work of the United Nations Steering Committee and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Convinced that the final review and evaluation of the implementation of the Programme of Action by the General Assembly should be an occasion for an in-depth appraisal of the actions taken by all sides in the implementation of the Programme, as well as of the measures that are needed to sustain accelerated growth and development in Africa beyond 1991,

Convinced further of the need for States members of the Economic Commission for Africa to conduct a thorough assessment of the implementation of the Programme and that such an assessment should be as up to date as possible,

Concerned over the continuing deterioration in the economic and social conditions in Africa and the possibility of the continuation of such trends in the 1990s,

1. Recommends that mechanisms for the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990 should be similar to those of the mid-term review of the Programme of Action and that for this purpose an Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly should be established to appraise the Programme of Action and to propose measures for sustained development in Africa beyond 1991;

2. Decides that a special memorandum addressed to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly on the review and appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990 should be

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1/ E/ECA/CM.16/4.

2/ E/ECA/CM.16/5.

prepared by the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa in May 1991 and that the draft of the special memorandum should be considered by an intergovernmental expert group meeting to be convened immediately before the meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole and the Conference of Ministers;

3. Invites the Executive Secretary of the Commission to mount special multisectoral missions to all member States of the Commission early in the fourth quarter of 1990 to collect up-to-date information on the implementation of the Programme of Action on the basis of which the special memorandum will be prepared;

4. Requests the General Assembly to make available to the secretariat of the Commission the financial resources that are required to mount such special missions on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action;

5. Urges member States and their development and planning apparatuses to participate actively in the preparation of the special memorandum.

702 (XXV) Transforming and strengthening the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) of the Economic Commission for Africa

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling resolution 311 (XIII) of 1 March 1977 of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa establishing the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres,

Recognizing that the Centres have, over the years, played a vital role in fostering subregional economic co-operation and integration and that the objectives for which they were established are more valid today than they were 13 years ago,

Considering the imperative need for women to participate positively and effectively in the implementation of programmes aimed at their integration in the process of development in each subregion,

Concerned about the poor performance and achievements of the Centres during the past few years, mostly as a result of insufficient financial and human resources and their inadequacy to meet the new tasks that they are to perform towards economic recovery and transformation,

Welcoming General Assembly resolution 43/216 of 21 December 1988 in which the Assembly, having considered the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1987 and the Report of the Board of Auditors, 3/ endorsed the recommendation of the Board 4/ and the concurring observation of the

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3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/43/5), vol. I.

4/ Ibid., para. 91.

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions 5/ that the achievements of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres be thoroughly evaluated with a view to deciding whether that experiment should be continued or whether the mandate, number and structure of the Centres should be completely reorganized,

Noting with satisfaction the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a review team whose mandate would be, inter alia, to examine the structure and organization of the Centres with a view to determining their suitability for the execution of their tasks, taking into account General Assembly resolution 43/216,

Noting that the current distribution and location of the Centres are in keeping with the spirit of the Final Act of Lagos 6/ in terms of the need to promote co-operation and integration within the framework of the subregional economic groupings,

1. Takes note of the report of the Review Team 7/ which concludes that the structure, organization and operations of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres of the Economic Commission for Africa should be maintained, transformed and strengthened;

2. Warmly congratulates the Review Team on the thorough and objective manner in which it has carried out its work and for its findings and recommendations thereon;

3. Strongly supports the conclusions of the Review Team that the Centres' institutions should be transformed and strengthened to provide member States with the required technical assistance and advisory services for the execution of their joint projects within the framework of the intergovernmental organizations;

4. Adopts the new mandate of the Centres as proposed by the Review Team;

5. Strongly urges the General Assembly to provide the Centres with additional human and financial resources to enable them to respond more effectively to multinational and multisectoral programming requirements based on priorities identified by the member States, and to provide immediately a minimum core of such resources;

6. Decides that, given the financial constraints and the need for better co-ordination between the Centres and intergovernmental organizations, the Centres should report directly to the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa through the committees of intergovernmental experts which will be responsible for supervising the activities of the Centres at the subregional level;

5/ See A/43/674, para. 13.

6/ See A/S-11/14, annex II.

7/ E/ECA/CM.16/13.

7. Urges the General Assembly and donor and technical assistance organizations to provide the Centres with sufficient resources for the formulation and implementation of programmes for the effective participation of women in the development process of their respective subregions;

8. Recommends that the current number and composition of the Centres should be maintained since they fit in with the structure of existing subregional economic groupings; their distribution could, however, be reviewed in future to make for the rational use of available resources and to reflect developments in the subregional economic groupings;

9. Considers the memorandum on the strengthening and transformation of the Centres, submitted by the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa, which is annexed to the present resolution;

10. Appeals to member States to continue their support and assistance to the Centres through the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development and through any other appropriate means;

11. Urges technical assistance and funding agencies to assist in the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the review team regarding the need to provide the Centres with sufficient financial and human resources for the effective execution of their mandate.

ANNEX

Memorandum of the Conference of Ministers of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa on the Report of the Review Team on the Structures, Organization and Operations of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres

1. This memorandum is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 43/216 on financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors which endorsed the concurring observations and recommendations of the Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions with regard to Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs). The resolution called for a thorough evaluation of the achievements of the MULPOCs with a view to deciding whether this experiment should be continued or whether the mandate, number and structures of these centres whould be completely reorganized.

2. Pursuant to the above-mentioned resolution, an independent review team was commissioned by the Executive Secretary of ECA in collaboration with the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management with the following terms of reference:

(a) To examine the original mandate, as contained in document E/ECA/CM.8/26 of 8 April 1982, with a view to ascertaining its continued relevance;

(b) To examine the structure and organization of MULPOCs with a view to determining their suitability for the execution of their tasks, taking into account the recommendation made in paragraph 91 of the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors; 8/

(c) To review and report on all aspects of management of the MULPOCs;

(d) To examine the adequacy of resources available and make recommendations aimed at strengthening the MULPOCs for a more efficient execution of their mandate;

(e) To investigate the effectiveness of the linkages with the substantive and service organizational units of the Economic Commission for Africa;

(f) To examine any other relevant matters pertaining to the efficient and effective operations of the MULPOCs;

(g) To report not later than 10 March 1989, or as soon as possible thereafter, to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management.

3. We wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General who, in accordance with our request contained in resolution 659 (XXIV) on the review of the achievements of the Multinational and Operational Centres of the Commission, has enabled us to comment on the report of the Review Team. We wish to reiterate that we welcome the decision of the General Assembly on the review and evaluation of the MULPOCs, as we believe that such a review is opportune. Finally we must express our sincere appreciation to the Review Team for the quality of its work and for the recommendations which it has put forward.

4. We wish in this memorandum to comment on those proposals and recommendations of the Review Team so that the General Assembly will have the benefit of our opinion on this matter. Our views have emerged from the extensive debate that took place on the report during our twenty-fifth session and sixteenth meeting preceded by an equally extensive discussion at the level of our Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole meetings held in Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 5 May to 19 May 1990.

5. In the light of our critical assessment of the proposals of the Review Team, we fully concur with the findings of the Review Team that the objectives and purposes for which the MULPOCs were established are more valid today than they were thirteen years ago, considering the socio-economic challenges which will confront the African countries in the 1990s. The member States argue strongly in favour of the maintenance, transformation and strengthening of an institution such as the MULPOCs provided with the additional human, technical and financial resources required for the execution of their joint projects within the framework of the intergovernmental organizations they have established.

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/43/5), vol. I.

6. We recommend that the number and membership of the MULPOCs should be retained, since they correspond to the existing subregional economic groupings. Our Conference will continue to pay the necessary attention to the issue of the subregional distribution of the MULPOCs with a view to ensuring the efficient utilization of available resources and in keeping with the evolution of subregional groupings.

7. We wish to seize this opportunity to express our appreciation to the MULPOCs for the services they have rendered and the role which they have played in supporting member countries' endeavours in promoting subregional and regional economic co-operation and integration in providing technical assistance to intergovernmental organizations in our different subregions. We wish in particular to underline the role of the MULPOCs in the establishment of the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and playing a co-ordinating role among the over 40 intergovernmental organizations in West Africa.

8. We endorse the findings of the Review Team with regard to the relevance of the MULPOCs as an institution to provide technical assistance in our efforts towards subregional groupings and the need to redefine the terms of reference of the MULPOCs in the light of past experiences and the challenges that are ahead. Accordingly we support, as proposed by the review team, the following terms of reference:

(a) To provide member States and intergovernmental organizations with technical assistance (advisory services) in project identification, planning and the formulation of multisectoral programmes and projects for execution by MULPOCs in association with intergovernmental organization secretariats and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system;

(b) To provide member States and intergovernmental organizations with short-term advisory services in development planning and to assist in the translation of those plans into multinational and multisectoral programmes and projects, including the identification and formulation of programmes and projects for execution by them or at their request by the Economic Commission for Africa-Subregional Technical Assistance Programmes (ECA-STAPs) (MULPOCs) themselves, in association with the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, as required;

(c) To undertake pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, research on and analyses of priority areas identified by member States and intergovernmental organizations in order to enhance subregional co-operation and integration;

(d) To provide assistance and support in the development of human resources and in organizing training courses, seminars, lectures, workshops and round-tables, and to execute multinational development programmes and projects for socio-economic advancement with a view to strengthening the institutional and organizational capacity of member States;

(e) To develop, in the light of the above, effective working relationships with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations Development

Programme offices and other international organizations with a view to harmonizing the designing, programming and implementation of technical assistance programmes at the subregional level;

(f) To develop and execute programmes for the more effective participation of women in all aspects of development efforts at the subregional level;

(g) To collect and disseminate, at the subregional level, information and statistical data on macro-economic indicators in the member States and to assist them in establishing compatible systems for exchanging information among themselves and with their development partners.

9. The MULPOCs should continue to play the important role of co-ordination among intergovernmental organizations, and they should also contribute to the establishment of the African economic community by undertaking studies for the harmonization and progressive linking of the various subregional economic groupings. They should also contribute to the implementation at the subregional level of strategies contained in global prospective studies carried out by the ECA secretariat.

10. We have realized that the inadequacy of resources has been the major constraint in the ability of the MULPOCs to fulfil their mandate. The build-up in their staff was severely affected by the financial crisis that the United Nations faced during most of the 1980s. Similarly, their operational activities were severely constrained by their lack of resources - financial and human. We are preoccupied by the resulting negative impact on the delivery of the MULPOCs in the past few years. The capacity of ECA to decentralize staff and resources to the MULPOCs was stretched to the limit in spite of its own severe resource constraints. We are not therefore surprised that under such circumstances the impact of these MULPOCs began to dwindle.

11. We therefore fully endorse the proposal of the review team that the financial and human resources of the MULPOCs be significantly increased as contained in chapter 6 of the evaluation report. We propose that the MULPOCs be provided with cost-effective minimal core staff that will enable them to have immediate impact on their respective subregions.

12. We do not preclude the possibility of changing the name "MULPOCs", and we will keep on reflecting on this possible change in the light of the evolution of their mandate and activities.

13. Finally, we wish to reiterate our firm commitment to the MULPOCs. As in the past, we will continue deploying every possible effort to create the enabling environment for the enhancement of their effectiveness.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

1. Economic Commission for Europe

Resolution 1 (45) The work of the Commission as a whole and its future activities

4. At its forty-fifth session, the Economic Commission for Europe adopted resolution 1 (45) in which the Commission called upon its member Governments to continue to take full advantage of the potential of the Commission as an instrument for strengthening economic relations and multilateral co-operation in the region.

5. It considered that full respect for the principles guiding relations among States set out in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Final Act, as well as the full implementation of all its provisions and those of the Madrid and the Vienna Concluding Documents, were an essential basis for the development of economic co-operation and contributed to the reinforcement of peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole. The Commission recognized the possibilities for contributing to recent and forthcoming CSCE meetings and conferences.

6. The Commission called upon its subsidiary bodies to pay special attention to the interests of member countries which were developing from an economic point of view and to take into account possible contributions to United Nations programmes designed to assist developing countries. It recognized the need for effective co-operation with other international organizations.

7. The Commission approved its programme of work for 1990-1991 and endorsed in principle, subject to review at its forty-sixth session, its programme of work for the period 1990-1994.

Decision A (45) The activities of the Economic Commission for Europe

8. The Commission stressed the importance of the political and economic reforms and the profound and rapid changes taking place in countries members of ECE. Wishing to maintain the momentum built up at the CSCE Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe (Bonn, March/April 1990), and considering that the process of economic reform and structural adjustment would enhance economic performance and contribute to a more open world trade system, the Commission decided to set up a Special Working Group (a) to define priority areas for future action by ECE; (b) to develop practical measures in these priority areas; (c) to elaborate, in non-priority sectors, broad outlines for work which is relevant to promoting economic reform and to integrating the economies in transition with the global economy; (d) to redefine, where appropriate, the mandates of its subsidiary bodies; (e) to make recommendations to a resumed session of the Commission in December 1990.

Decision B (45) Terms of reference of the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems

9. The Commission approved the terms of reference of this subsidiary body.

Decision C (45) The Code of Conduct on accidental pollution of transboundary inland waters

10. Mindful that prevention and control of transboundary pollution in rivers, lakes, reservoirs and aquifers crossing or forming frontiers between two or more countries, as well as prevention and control of floods and other natural disasters, are tasks which can only be accomplished by enhanced co-operation among riparian countries, the Commission adopted the Code of Conduct on accidental pollution of transboundary inland waters and invited Governments to develop or strengthen methodologies, measures and practices regarding accidental pollution, both at the pre-accident and post-accident stages.

Decision D (45) The work of the Commission concerning economies in transition in Eastern and Central Europe

11. Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/85 on the role of the United nations in the early identification, analysis and monitoring of world economic developments, taking account of the fact that the recent and current developments in Europe modify the characteristics and functioning of the societies and economies of the region, and in view of the composition of the Commission and the nature of the co-operation which it implements, the Commission considered that it has a role to play in assisting the transition to market economies.

12. It requested the Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments to discuss practical themes for workshops whenever possible on an interdisciplinary basis and in collaboration with other international institutions dealing with this issue.

Decision E (45) Climate change

13. Welcoming General Assembly resolutions 43/53 and 44/207 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind, the Commission was convinced that it could contribute to preventing or adapting to the detrimental effects on climate and other activities affecting the ecological balance. It expressed satisfaction that issues related to climate change had been taken up by ECE bodies and requested the Executive Secretary to continue to assess the Commission's activities bearing on the relationship of human activities to the climate, taking into account work done in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Energy Agency.

Decision F (45) Statistical activities

14. Taking into account the new needs of European economic co-operation, the transition into market economies, the processes of integration in Europe and the need to rapidly find statistical instruments to monitor economic, social and environmental trends cross-nationally over all of Europe, and recognizing that the provision of internationally comparable statistics represents a key factor in the integration of the economies in transition, the Commission invited the Conference of European Statisticians to adapt its work programme to those needs.

15. It invited member countries to raise the intensity of their contribution and requested the Conference to provide a framework for methodological assistance to national statistical offices for the introduction of international standard concepts and classifications.

Decision G (45) ECE contribution to the implementation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, including earthquake reduction

16. Recalling General Assembly resolution 44/236, and considering that ECE might make a contribution to fostering international co-operation in the field of natural disaster reduction, the Commission recalled the conclusions of the Seminar on the Prediction of Earthquakes (Lisbon, 1988), and urged the convening of an ad hoc meeting to formulate proposals on follow-up action to the Lisbon Seminar. It welcomed the prospect of convening an international symposium on earthquake prediction, monitoring facilities and techniques to promote joint efforts in a co-ordinated way.

Decision H (45) Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development

17. The Commission welcomed General Assembly resolutions 44/227 and 44/228 and agreed to intensify further its efforts towards promoting and achieving sustainable development by integrating environmental concerns into projects and programmes in all areas. It also welcomed the progress made in developing sectoral and interdisciplinary activities contributing to sustainable development.

18. It considered that the results of the regional conference at the ministerial level (Bergen, Norway, 8-16 May 1990) should constitute a major contribution by the ECE region to the 1992 Conference, convened by resolution 44/228.

19. The Executive Secretary was invited to bring to the attention of the other regional commissions the ECE activities aimed at sustainable development and, in particular, the results of the Bergen Conference.

Decision I (45) Co-operation in the field of environmental protection and water resources and in the field of long-range transboundary air pollution

20. The Commission stressed that co-operation to protect the environment was one of the ECE priorities, and noted the progress achieved within the framework of the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

21. It noted with concern the serious environmental implications in some member States resulting from major accidents with transboundary consequences, such as the Chernobyl accident. It emphasized the need for preventive action to protect the environment in the region and stressed the role of ECE in elaborating international legal instruments to this end.

22. It noted the decision of the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems to draft a legal instrument on transboundary impacts of industrial accidents, and a framework convention on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes. It expressed satisfaction with the progress on a Framework Agreement on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

23. It also expressed satisfaction with the progress in the preparation of a protocol to the 1979 Convention, on volatile organic compounds, and stressed the need to reach agreements for further reduction of sulphur emissions after 1993.

24. The Commission invited the Senior Advisers to complete the European Red List of Threatened Animals and Plants, as well as to continue work on the application of effective and environmentally sound technologies and the enhancing of scientific and technological co-operation.

Decision J (45) EDIFACT

25. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of UN/EDIFACT as a standard that would permit unprecedented increases in efficiency and financial savings in the conduct of international trade, and requested the Executive Secretary to provide the necessary resources for this work.

Decision K (45) Co-operation in the field of transport

26. Bearing in mind the important role of transport in economic and social development as recognized by the Vienna CSCE Meeting and conscious of the problems related to safety, environment and energy which may result in this sector as a consequence of economic changes, the Commission noted the conclusions drawn by the Inland Transport Committee concerning the Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRDT).

27. It welcomed the Committee's decisions to organize a road safety week in the ECE region (1 to 7 October 1990); to study the revision of the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR); and to mandate a Seminar on the Evolution in the Dimensions of Loading Units in 1992.

28. It invited Governments and competent international organizations to participate actively in the road safety week and endorsed the importance of continuing multilateral efforts to reduce air pollution and noise by motor vehicle emissions.

29. The Commission underlined the importance of a soundly functioning combined transport system and the desirability of completing the Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), and the importance of continuing the harmonization of regulations on motor vehicle construction, as well as the development of a European railway network on the basis of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC).

30. It invited member countries to spare no efforts in elaborating the text of a Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers used in International Transport.

Decision L (45) Economic co-operation in the Mediterranean in the light of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

31. The Commission considered that recent developments in various spheres of life in the ECE region were of direct relevance to the forms of future economic co-operation in the Mediterranean region, and took note with satisfaction of the convening of a CSCE Meeting on the Mediterranean in Palma de Mallorca in September/October 1990, which would consider ways of enhancing co-operation, including the protection and improvement of Mediterranean ecosystems.

32. It took note of the encouraging and constructive contributions from the Mediterranean countries, as well as from the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

33. It expressed satisfaction at the activities of the two Mediterranean transport study centres and the transport training centre, confirming that they were of practical value and, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/169 on conferring United Nations status on them, invited the Executive Secretary to pursue his efforts for the implementation of that resolution.

Decision M (45) Standardization and related activities

34. The Commission confirmed its decision to convene meetings of its subsidiary bodies dealing with that subject.

Decision N (45) Engineering industries and automation

35. The Commission approved the programme of work for 1990-1994 and the calendar of meetings of the Working Party on Engineering Industries and Automation. It recognized the three workshops being organized by the Working Party in the field of rehabilitation engineering as an ECE contribution to the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.

2. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

36. At its 23rd session, held from 3 to 11 May 1990, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) adopted five resolutions of particular interest to the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 507 (XXIII) Changing production patterns, social equity and the international development strategy

37. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the ECLAC secretariat document entitled "Changing production patterns with social equity" as a valuable contribution to the debate on re-establishment of the development process. The resolution stressed the need for concerted effort and international co-operation to overcome the obstacles and constraints to development. It welcomed the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, adopted on 1 May 1990 by the General Assembly at its Eighteenth Special Session, 9/ and set forth the priority concerns of Latin America and the Caribbean in that regard. Finally, the Executive Secretary was instructed to collaborate with member countries in the review of the proposals set forth in the ECLAC document with special emphasis on the design of appropriate policies and institutions for changing production patterns and social equity.

Resolution 505 (XXIII) Admission of Puerto Rico as an associate member of ECLAC

38. By resolution 505 (XXIII) the Commission decided to admit Puerto Rico as an associate member and welcomed its participation in the work of ECLAC.

Resolution 506 (XXIII) Economic co-operation between the Caribbean nations and the other countries of the region

39. Resolution 506 (XXIII) adopted by the Commission urged the Latin American and Caribbean countries to intensify their efforts to identify concrete possibilities for co-operation and recommended that the issue be discussed both by the Caribbean

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9/ A/RES/S-18/3.

Development and Co-operation Committee and by the Commission at its regular sessions. The Executive Secretary was requested to intensify co-operation between the subregional headquarters in Mexico and Port of Spain in order to promote greater technical co-operation.

Resolution 515 (XXIII) Activities of ECLAC in the fight against drug abuse

40. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to study regional forms of application of the Global Programme of Action on international co-operation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances 10/ and the implementation of the United Nations Decade Against Drug Abuse and requested him to intensify future ECLAC activities in that field, giving particular emphasis to studying and making recommendations regarding the economic impact of the production, illicit trafficking and consumption of drugs in the region. ECLAC was also requested to support national programmes of alternative development and interdiction and prevention of the production, transport, trafficking and consumption of drugs, through the preparation of studies and policy guidelines.

Resolution 516 (XXIII) Activities of ECLAC in the field of the environment

41. The Commission invited the countries of the region to co-ordinate their policies and strategies in the field of the environment and to contribute their most significant experiences to the preparation of the 1992 World Conference, especially through their participation in the regional preparatory meeting, to be held in Mexico City in 1991. The Executive Secretary was invited to redouble his efforts in seeking new forms of environmentally and socially balanced development and to increase the future activities of ECLAC in that area.

Other resolutions adopted by ECLAC at its twenty-third session

42. At the same session, the Commission adopted resolutions in which it approved the programme of work for the period 1992-1993 (resolution 510 (XXIII)), and the calendar of conferences for the period 1990-1992 (resolution 509 (XXIII)). It also adopted resolution 512 (XXIII), setting work priorities for the Latin American Demographic Center (CELADE); resolution 511 (XXIII), establishing guidelines for the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) vis-à-vis the new situations facing the region; and resolution 513 (XXIII), endorsing the recommendations of the Fourth regional Conference on Women in Development and calling for support of ECLAC activities in that field. The Commission also adopted resolution 514 (XXIII) on international drinking water

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10/ See A/RES/S-17/2, annex, p. 7.

supply and sanitation towards the year 2000 and resolution 508 (XXIII) on co-operation among developing countries and regions. Finally, the Commission adopted resolution 503 (XXIII) on support for Haiti in the context of the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries.

3. Economic Commission for Africa

43. The Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa also adopted the following resolutions:

679 (XXV) Improving information flows in the African region

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolution 498 (XIX) of 26 May 1984 on the Pan-African Documentation and Information System in Africa,

Recalling also its resolution 600 (XXII) of 24 April 1987 on information systems development in Africa,

Bearing in mind its resolution 658 (XXIV) of 7 April 1989 on strengthening information systems in Africa,

Noting with satisfaction the performance of the System in the delivery of technical assistance to member States in the period since 1988,

Appreciative of efforts made by the System in creating an information system to assist member States in their development,

Noting with concern the precarious situation of the bulk of the System's funding for technical assistance which is presently scheduled to end on 31 December 1990,

Recognizing the need for adequate training in the region in current information technology,

Concerned about the paucity of up-to-date computer equipment at the Economic Commission for Africa secretariat to be used in the service of African member States,

1. Commends member States which have already designated national participating centres in the Pan-African Documentation and Information System network and calls upon those that have not done so to designate their participating centres;

2. Reminds participating centres of their role in the network, including the contribution of information;

3. Urges member States hosting subregional centres to accelerate the process of their establishment;

4. Strongly urges the United Nations Development Programme to ensure the continuation of the System's technical assistance activities on behalf of member States by supplementing its allocation to project RAF/86/053 to permit the continuation of professional and administrative staff through the United Nations Development Programme Fifth Programming Cycle;

5. Exhorts African member States to include the System in their pledges to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development;

6. Appeals to bilateral and multilateral donors to continue and upgrade their support to the System;

7. Requests the Executive Secretary to explore further ways and means of securing regular budget posts for the System;

8. Urges the United Nations Secretary-General to provide the System with the necessary computer equipment to ensure its effective functioning.

682 (XXV) Improving technical facilities of the Economic Commission for Africa

The Conference of Ministers,

Recognizing the need for providing adequate equipment and training in the region in current information technology,

Concerned about the paucity of up-to-date office automation and computing equipment at the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa,

Further concerned about the constraints that such a situation imposes on the Commission to properly assist African member States in enhancing their planning and monitoring capacities,

Urges the United Nations Secretary-General to provide the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa with the necessary office automation and computing equipment for its optimal functioning and for better service to member States.

684 (XXV) The Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in the 1990s

The Conference of Ministers,

Having considered in depth the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in the 1990s, as adopted by the African Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development at its fourth meeting, held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 6 to 10 November 1989,

Having noted that the issues raised and concerns expressed by the Conference, with regard to the implementation of the Arusha Strategies on the Advancement of Women in Africa, are consistent with the aforementioned Declaration and reinforce the mandate of this Conference,

Mindful of the need to accelerate the pace of implementation of the Arusha Strategies and to take concerted action to mobilize support from every quarter to promote women's participation and integration in the development process,

Mindful of the need for a socio-economic strategy for the 1990s enabling women to fully play their roles and assume their responsibilities with regard to the conceptualization, planning, design and implementation of programmes conducive to long-term sustainable socio-economic transformation,

Concerned by the devastating impact of Africa's socio-economic crisis and the short-term structural adjustment measures which have aggravated the social degradation and lack of economic opportunities for women,

Appreciative of the initiative taken by the Conference, which represents an essential contribution to national, regional and international efforts to improve the human condition in Africa,

1. Congratulates the organizers of the Conference for their commendable initiative to assess the progress made in the implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa, to identify problems impeding their overall impact and to recommend comprehensive measures whose implementation at the national, subregional, regional and international levels would accelerate the integration of women in the development process;

2. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of Nigeria for its generosity in acting as host for the Conference and, in particular, to the President of Nigeria and Mrs. Maryam Babangida for their leadership role in ensuring the success of the Conference;

3. Further expresses its deep appreciation to the participating Governments for ensuring high-level and fully motivated representation at the Conference, and to the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, the non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations and other multilateral and bilateral donors that contributed generously to the organization of the Conference which resulted in the Abuja Declaration;

4. Endorses the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Conference as set forth in the Abuja Declaration concerning participatory development of African women in the 1990s;

5. Urges member States to fully implement the recommendations of the Abuja Declaration by integrating women as an essential part of their recovery and long-term development programmes;

6. Further urges international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors, organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and African intergovernmental organizations to implement, as a matter of urgency, the recommendations contained in the Abuja Declaration;

7. Requests the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to ensure that speedy and appropriate follow-up action is taken to implement the recommendations contained in the Abuja Declaration;

8. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to disseminate the Abuja Declaration as widely as possible, particularly to member States, all United Nations agencies and organizations, donor countries and organizations, regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, institutions of higher learning and manpower development establishments in Africa;

9. Further requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Arusha Strategies and to submit comprehensive reports thereon to the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

695 (XXV) Planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolutions 674 (XXIV) and 675 (XXIV) of 7 April 1989 on the draft medium-term plan, 1992-1997, and the proposed programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1990-1991,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 37/234 of 21 December 1982 on programme planning,

Having examined the report of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Draft Medium-Term Plan, 1992-1997 (E/ECA/CM.16/29), the proposals for updating the 1990-1991 programme budget (E/ECA/CM.16/28), the biennial report of the Executive Secretary, 1988-1989 (E/ECA/CM.16/2) and the self-evaluation of programmes in ECA (E/ECA/CM.16/30),

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 44/201 B of 21 December 1989, part VIII, on the Economic Commission for Africa, concerning the inadequacy of resources and the review of the translation and interpretation services,

Expressing its appreciation for the support of the African Group in New York and African representatives on the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the Economic and Social Council,

Expressing its deep appreciation for the efforts of the African Group in New York in its endeavours for an increase in resources for the Economic Commission for Africa for the biennium 1992-1993,

Noting with satisfaction the high performance rates in the implementation of the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989,

1. Endorses the report of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Draft Medium-Term Plan, 1992-1997;

2. Endorses also the proposals for updating the 1990-1991 programme budget;

3. Approves the changes to the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989, including the reformulation of outputs, the postponements, the proposals for termination and the additional outputs included at the initiative of the secretariat in accordance with the factors necessitating such changes;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to include those changes in his submission to the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination;

5. Calls upon the African members of the Committee to support the changes to the programme budget for the biennium 1988-1989;

6. Also calls upon the African Group in New York to continue its support for an increase in resources for the biennium 1992-1993 for the Economic Commission for Africa, in accordance with the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

Resolution 678 (XXV) United Nations Trust Fund for African Development: accumulated interest

The Conference of Ministers authorized the Executive Secretary of ECA to use the interest accrued on the UNTFAD Specific Fund contributions for the implementation of projects consistent with the purpose of UNTFAD.

Resolution 681 (XXV) Future of the African demographic training institutes

The Conference of Ministers called the attention of member States to the fact that failure to pay contributions to the institutes might compel them to close down and urged African member States to see to it that they fully assume their responsibilities for the survival of the institutes.

Resolution 683 (XXV) The Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s

The Conference of Ministers appealed to intergovernmental agencies and multilateral and bilateral donor institutions to continue and further strengthen their assistance in the statistical field in the region, within the context of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s.

Resolution 685 (XXV) Women and apartheid

The Conference of Ministers requested the Economic Commission for Africa to institute mechanisms that would strengthen the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference and sustain activities in favour of women of the subregion directly or indirectly.

Resolution 686 (XXV) Women in global and regional strategies

The Conference of Ministers requested that during the negotiations with development agencies, ECA and member States take into account the conclusions of the Abuja Conference and ensure that women's needs are taken into account in the provisions of these agreements.

Resolution 687 (XXV) Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC)

The Conference of Ministers requested ECA to strengthen the human resources of the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) to enhance its capacity to service ARCC.

Resolution 688 (XXV) Establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee for the Development of Nuclear Science and Technology in Africa

The Conference of Ministers decided to establish a Technical Advisory Committee for the Development of Nuclear Science and Technology in Africa to provide a system for the acquisition and transfer of technology in the field of nuclear science and technology in Africa, making it possible to achieve a steady development of African capabilities in this field.

Resolution 689 (XXV) Strengthening of capacities in Africa for the development and application of science and technology in the 1990s

The Conference of Ministers considers that science and technology should be one of the major components in the national, subregional and regional programmes of

socio-economic development in Africa and urged member States to set up a fund for science and technology for development.

Resolution 690 (XXV) Making the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) operational

The Conference of Ministers strongly urged member States that have not done so to undertake urgent steps to ratify the Constitution and pay their contributions so that the Centre can become operational.

Resolution 691 (XXV) The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation and the recovery and development process in Africa

The Conference of Ministers adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Arusha 1990) as a statement of the strategy that should be incorporated in development policies adopted by African Governments, with a view to promoting popular participation in development and by encouraging people and their organizations to undertake self-reliant development initiatives.

Resolution 692 (XXV) Hydrographic surveying and nautical charting services

The Conference of Ministers drew the attention of African countries to the availability within the International Hydrographic Organization of technical capabilities that can be profitably used in their maritime hydrographic and nautical charting activities and in the establishment of national hydrographic and nautical charting committees.

Resolution 694 (XXV) Co-operation in fisheries in Africa

The Conference of Ministers urged African States to establish an intra-African information network on fishing vessels operating illegally and to propose measures to be instituted within the context of a regional legal framework to ban such vessels.

Resolution 696 (XXV) "Priority Africa" Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The Conference of Ministers welcomed with satisfaction the "Priority Africa" Programme and expressed its appreciation to the Director-General of UNESCO for the initiative he has taken in launching this Programme and for setting up a unit in his cabinet for its implementation.

Resolution 697 (XXV) Improvement of the role of women in the informal sector: production and management

The Conference of Ministers recommended that African countries consider favourably the legal ways and means of helping in the work protection and profits of operators in the informal sector and in the enhancement of the role of women in the informal sector.

Resolution 699 (XXV) Strengthening the African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research

The Conference of Ministers called upon member States of the Institute to pay their contributions to the budget of the Institute as expeditiously as possible.

Resolution 700 (XXV) Proposed establishment of the African Economic Community

The Conference of Ministers appealed to all member States to take every measure at the national, subregional and regional levels to implement the project in accordance with the indicative time-frame.

Resolution 701 (XXV) Contributions of member States to ECA-sponsored institutions

The Conference of Ministers invites all member States to pay particular attention to and support the ECA-sponsored institutions, with a view to promoting their activities and enabling them to generate the necessary resources for their operations.

Resolution 703 (XXV) Menace of the new world screwworm fly

The Conference of Ministers urged and called upon all donor countries, United Nations agencies and all other relevant bodies to come forward promptly to enable the launching of a massive operation from within the Great Jamahiriya to eradicate this potentially dangerous pest.

Resolution 704 (XXV) Emergency assistance to Namibia

The Conference of Ministers appealed to the United Nations system, international organizations and multilateral organizations to contribute resources that would enable the Economic Commission for Africa to implement an emergency programme of assistance in Namibia.

II. WORK OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

A. Economic Commission for Europe

44. In the course of the past year, major political, economic and social transformations have occurred and are still under way in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in particular the move from a single to a multi-party system, from planned to market economies and towards increased personal freedoms.

45. Virtually all these countries are now firmly committed to radical economic restructuring. However, the reform process differs from country to country with respect to both scope and timing, depending upon varying traditions and aspirations, different resources and widely different stages of economic development.

46. To transform their economies into efficient market economies the Governments of these countries need to embark on a programme of institutional change on a very broad front. This has to be started in most countries against a background of severe, short-run stabilization problems, the solutions to which are likely to make heavy demands on the population. The extent to which these demands will be accepted without breaking the social consensus will depend on the degree to which there is confidence and credibility in the longer-term programme for structural reform.

47. The scale and radical nature of the changes in these countries have given rise to considerable uncertainties. Political change may be rapid, but economic adjustment is generally much slower. The certainties of the central planning system have been eroded more quickly than the alternative mechanisms of the market can be put in place. Although the short-term economic outlook for 1990 is sombre, formal economic stabilization programmes have been launched in several countries. Moreover, the Western market economies have clearly stated their willingness to support and assist the process of reform in the East. A prime concern, therefore, is to analyse carefully the problems faced by these countries.

48. At the same time, integration is progressing dynamically within the framework of the European Community, which is already looking beyond the target of the completion of the single market by the end of 1992, preparing itself for negotiations on economic and monetary union. In addition, negotiations with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) are to be taken up soon, aiming at the creation of a European economic space. In view of the most recent changes in Central and Eastern Europe, the unification of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic and the status of association for central and Eastern European countries have been put on the agenda of the Community. The mandate entrusted to the Commission of the European Communities to co-ordinate assistance provided by the Group of 24 to Eastern European countries has given the Community an additional role in East-West relations, which will be further enhanced by new institutions to be set up in the near future: the European Environment Agency and the European Training Foundation. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which is being established on a multilateral basis, will add to the East-West co-operation machinery.

49. ECE subsidiary organs in the areas of transport, trade, industry, energy, environment, agriculture and statistics have at their recent meetings already reacted in various ways to the challenges posed by the changing conditions.

50. At its forty-fifth session, ECE, after intensive discussion of the changes under way in the region and the role of ECE in the architecture of the new Europe, decided to accord general priority to activities designed to assist the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in transition to market economies and in integrating their economies with the global economy. In that context, the need to develop and harmonize statistical concepts, nomenclatures and classifications as well as to enhance the comparability of statistical information has taken on new importance. Similarly, questions of transport are seen to play a key role. The many changes under way provide a new challenge and opportunity for the creation of a more harmonized and integrated transport system in the region.

51. The role of the CSCE process, in the context of the changes taking place in the region, has assumed paramount importance in East-West relations. The Concluding Document of the Vienna follow-up meeting, which was signed in January 1989, provided the mandate for three follow-up activities in the field of economic and technical co-operation: the Sofia Meeting on the Environment, the Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe and the Palma de Mallorca Meeting on the Mediterranean.

52. The two major projects on which the Sofia Meeting agreed, namely a Framework Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters and a Legal Instrument on Transboundary Impacts of Industrial Accidents, have already been taken up by the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems.

53. The changed situation in Europe was reflected at the recently concluded CSCE Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe held at Bonn. The Document of the Bonn Conference confirmed the intentions of the participating States to shape a new order of peace, stability and prosperity in Europe and was a tangible expression of their commitment to economic co-operation as an essential element in their overall relations.

54. Although the question of the future institutional framework for economic co-operation in the region was not on the agenda of the Bonn Conference, it was nevertheless discussed intensively. There seems to be growing support for the view that while there may be a need for the creation of new permanent institutions in the context of CSCE, particularly in areas where no such institutions exist, a meaningful role should be assigned to existing organizations in the region such as ECE, with a view to avoiding duplication and making use of their expertise and experience. The task of shaping the new Europe is so vast that the full potential of all existing and possible new institutions will have to be mobilized and combined to meet the formidable challenges ahead. It was agreed that in defining the respective roles of the various institutions the foremost criteria should be their relative strengths and comparative advantages as demonstrated in practice.

55. In addition to its favourable references to the work of ECE in the fields of the environment and statistics, the Bonn Document also invited ECE to develop

practical activities in priority areas. In response, the Commission agreed to set up a Special Working Group to review the priorities of the Commission under changing circumstances and to make relevant recommendations to the Commission at its resumed forty-fifth session, on 14 December 1990.

56. Although many problems are now being removed or reduced in bilateral economic and commercial accords and although many barriers earlier perceived as being of a "systemic" nature give way to more similar methods of economic management and organization, numerous obstacles still exist. As stated in the Vienna Concluding Document, efforts should be undertaken to further reduce or progressively eliminate these obstacles. In this connection the work of ECE on East-West industrial co-operation and joint ventures has attracted much support. The secretariat is monitoring closely the dynamic development of this innovative form of East-West co-operation and has launched a quarterly newsletter containing legal, statistical and economic information on East-West joint venture developments, which provides up-to-date and reliable information. It has also published a Guide on Drawing Up East-West Joint Ventures and a Guide on Counterpurchase Contracts.

57. Governments members of ECE also attach importance to the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the development of intra-regional trade. Such enterprises often create and respond to trading opportunities more flexibly than do large ones. They have an impressive record of innovative activity and help to assure the smooth functioning of competitive markets. SMEs are at the centre of job creation and the entrepreneurship so critical for the economies in transition.

58. Opportunities for developing East-West trade in services are also particularly promising. Their exploitation would benefit the long-sought aim of diversification of East-West trade. In some areas, particularly tourism, the scope for growth could well be very large indeed, in view of recent developments in the region.

59. A subject of particular interest to Governments and international business is the ECE project on UN/EDIFACT (Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport). It is in the interest of all operators engaged in international commercial exchanges to rationalize and modernize otherwise costly documentary procedures. The move towards "paperless trading", by means of electronic communications, is yielding very considerable savings in the conduct of international trade. The regional commissions, jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, [illegible], in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/118, elaborated a draft proposal on the subject of international co-operation in trade facilitation, in particular the phase implementation of EDIFACT, wherever appropriate, which is submitted to the Council at its present session (see sect. I).

60. The past year has witnessed an intensification of work on environmental questions within the ECE region with progress on nearly every front, from air pollution to ground water, from hazardous wastes to environmental impact assessment and sustainable development. There is growing awareness that there is a close link between economic activity and environmental stress. Until recently, the environment has tended to take second place in economic decision-making. The Commission has adopted sustainable development as a guiding principle for its

activities wherever relevant. The Regional Conference at the Ministerial Level on the Follow-up to the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, held at Bergen in May 1989 at the invitation of the Government of Norway and in close co-operation with ECE, proved to be a major event. The results of the Conference, including the Ministerial Declaration and the Joint Agenda for Action, constitute a major input to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

61. The major undertaking during the period under review is the preparation of the Commission theme topic, "Restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s", with special reference to regional economic co-operation. Several issues of major concern to the countries of the region have been identified, including economic restructuring of the least developed and Pacific island developing countries. Keeping in view the revitalization of economic growth in developing countries, the theme topic on restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s will be an important item on the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the Commission. The secretariat's work in this area focuses on the challenges and opportunities created by restructuring efforts in the region, and the need for a favourable international economic climate and enhanced regional co-operation among the members and associate members of the Commission. In preparation for the 1990s, several in-depth studies have been prepared, which deal comprehensively with such important areas as institutional aspects of regional economic co-operation, trade, currency arrangements, development finance and balance of payments, financing and industrial restructuring. The forthcoming session of the Commission is expected to come up with an action plan for restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in specific areas of economic development.

62. In the context of the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries and the regional preparation for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 1990, part II of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1989, is devoted to an analytical study which delineates the structural weaknesses in the least developed countries and the Pacific island economies. Patterns and characteristics of economic growth and structural transformation in the least developed countries as well as Pacific island economies are examined, with particular emphasis on performance in the sectors of agriculture, industry and trade. The study's recommendations, which will be submitted to the Commission at its forty-sixth session, stress the necessity for an accelerated rate of economic growth in this group of countries.

63. Within the framework of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and preparations for the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, the secretariat actively participated in various stages of its preparation. Based on the performance during the Third United Nations Development Decade, the secretariat has prepared an analytical study for submission to the Commission at its forthcoming session outlining major trends, emerging

concerns and development priorities, with a focus on such key issues as accelerated growth of the world economy and the central role of human resources development, which are critically interrelated.

64. As a follow-up to the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP region, the secretariat has also prepared a report on the theme of quality of life in the ESCAP region, which will be submitted to the Commission at its forthcoming session. The report stresses the strategies for attaining quality-of-life goals including health, employment, shelter, environment, social security, social defence and education. At the same session, the Commission will examine the secretariat activities related to the implementation of Commission resolution 45/1 of 5 April 1989 on a regional social development strategy towards the year 2000 and beyond, as well as progress made towards the implementation of Commission resolution 45/3 of 5 April 1989 on regional support for the International Literacy Year. Towards the fulfilment of the objectives of International Literacy Year and the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, which was convened from 5 to 9 March 1990 in Bangkok, the secretariat, as associate sponsor, actively participated in the Conference and provided the necessary substantive and technical inputs. The contribution of ESCAP is essentially based on its overall strategy on human resources development in the region, as outlined in the Jakarta Plan of Action. A very critical component of this strategy, which is the key element in the whole process of economic development and co-operation in the region, is the role of basic skill development and education in the reciprocal relationship of economic growth and human resources development. Several important activities were undertaken in the area of integration of women in development, including publication of policy guidelines as a means of stimulating national action to eliminate discriminatory legislative provisions and practices impeding the achievement of equal rights for women.

65. The secretariat undertook several activities in the area of environmental protection including the ESCAP/UNEP/Regional Network of Research and Training Centres on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific (DESCONAP) project, which aimed at further strengthening control of desertification and deforestation. A second report on the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific was prepared for submission to the ministerial-level Conference on Environment in Asia and the Pacific, which is scheduled to be held from 10 to 16 October 1990. As part of the preparation of this Conference, an ESCAP/UNDP Meeting of Eminent Persons on Greening the Development Process was convened in October 1989. The meeting focused attention on the design of a possible regional strategy for environmentally sound and sustainable development in order to assist Asian and Pacific countries in their efforts to integrate effectively conflicting environmental and developmental considerations in the region. Recommendations of the regional ministerial-level Conference, which is expected to adopt such a strategy, will serve as the major contribution of ESCAP to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992. To effectively respond to global concerns about environmental deterioration, the secretariat also initiated and executed a project on the climatic effects of increased burning of fossil fuels and energy policy implications.

66. A notable development in regional co-operation has been the initiation and expansion of activities under the Network of Local Authorities for Management of Human Settlements (CITYNET). The Network has formalized the institutional framework for its self-reliant operation, in which a number of city authorities, non-governmental organizations and other related institutions are actively involved. In line with ESCAP resolution 268 (XLIV) of 20 April 1988, on shelter strategies towards the year 2000, the secretariat has assisted Governments in their efforts to adopt innovative shelter and settlement strategies which would contribute to the development of necessary human resources.

67. Towards the implementation of the objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, as called for in General Assembly resolutions 42/169 of 11 December 1987 and 43/202 of 20 December 1988, the Commission adopted resolution 45/5 at its forty-fifth session in 1989. The secretariat has taken several steps, including the establishment of an interdivisional task force with the responsibility of ensuring effective co-ordination and implementation of all relevant activities within the entire multisectoral programme of ESCAP in order to assist Governments in their efforts to mitigate the damage caused by natural disasters and to alleviate their adverse effects on development. Several measures have been taken, including the development of a programme based on technical co-operation among developing countries in order to promote the sharing of expertise and experience among members and associate members of ESCAP.

68. Another important aspect of ESCAP activities concerns the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994, which reached its mid-point in 1989. In noting this, the Commission, at its forty-fifth session, decided that a comprehensive review of the progress made towards the implementation of the programme for the Decade was necessary in order to determine the future direction of the programme. Several missions were launched to many countries of the region in order to compile data and information regarding the latest status of implementation of the programmes for the Decade at the national level. A number of activities were also undertaken in the area of ports and shipping, including the development of an upgraded, updated and uniform maritime legal framework, and the provision of technical and advisory services to the Governments in order to implement the guidelines of maritime legislation.

69. In line with General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations and Economic and Social Council decision 1987/112 of 6 February 1987 on the in-depth study of the United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in the economic and social fields, the Commission adopted resolution 262 (XLIII) at its forty-third session, in 1987, introducing further reorganization and rationalization of its conference structure. The effectiveness of the revised conference structure will be a subject of review at the forthcoming session, and it is expected that further basic changes in the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission may be considered through an in-depth study and the organization of a group of eminent persons during 1990, with a view to reorienting the conference structure to the multidisciplinary programme needs of the Asia-Pacific region, which has been undergoing rapid changes in various aspects of socio-economic development. The Commission also adopted the new structure of the

medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, on the basis of which the plan objectives and strategy were prepared, underlining important emerging issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

70. Implementation of the ECLAC work programme during 1989 was aimed at assisting ECLAC member countries in their endeavours to surmount the effects of the severe crisis that they have been suffering throughout the 1980s.

71. As regards the food and agriculture programme, mention should be made of outputs dealing with (1) food security, (2) the relationships between macro-economic policies and agricultural development; (3) the economic and technico-operational relations developing in agro-industrial processing and related services, on the one hand, and their repercussions on the structure of agricultural production, on the other.

72. Work performed under the development issues and policies programme provided systematic annual and conjunctural analyses of economic trends in the region, as well as of developments and policies in all countries, in the annual Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, the annual mid-year report Economic Panorama of Latin America and the end-of-the-year report Preliminary Overview of the Economy of Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, comparative analyses were carried out of structural development problems and alternative development strategies; the incidence of the debt overhang on growth; fiscal adjustment and fiscal policies; conditions and policies for restoring macro-economic equilibria and the conditions for regaining sustainable growth.

73. In the field of information and documentation for economic and social development, assistance was provided to countries of the region in the establishment or improvement of national information systems through advisory missions and the organization of six training seminars, whereby 170 national specialists were trained.

74. The Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) continued its training activities. More than 100 professionals of the region were trained.

75. With regard to the environment, especially noteworthy were the activities developed at the national level in selected countries. These experiences represent an important step towards enhancing the understanding of the relationship between development and the environment and the different factors involved: institutional, legal, socio-economic and political.

76. The ECLAC programme on human settlements, carried out jointly with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), has been responsive to the regional demand for research on planning methodology and appropriate building technologies. In addition, special emphasis was given to the study of the functioning of the region's metropolitan areas, in view of their impact on economic and social development in many countries of the region.

77. Work performed under the industrial development and science and technology programmes by the Joint ECLAC/UNIDO Industry and Technology Division achieved significant consensus among policy-makers in member countries on the importance of incorporating technical progress criteria in the definition of international competitiveness in industrial strategies and policies to broaden the links with non-governmental organizations active in the region that are related to the industrial sector; supplying the Governments of the region with studies to help them to identify and encourage technical co-operation activities among them in the industrial field; increasing the dissemination of information on the above activities, thereby strengthening linkages with public, private and academic organizations within and outside the region; maintaining close contacts with governmental and academic institutions of some European countries, in particular Italy, Spain, France, the Netherlands and Sweden, and with some international organizations of great importance in the industrial sector: the World Bank and the Development Institute of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

78. Within the ECLAC programme on international trade, analyses were prepared on the progress attained in the international negotiations in trade and finance forums, such as the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and the numerous meetings on external debt. In close collaboration with UNCTAD and the Latin American Economic System (SELA), reports were prepared in order to establish the strategic interests of the member countries in the specific themes that are being dealt with in the Round, while actions and negotiation positions have been recommended to Governments of countries of the region based on such studies. Within the context of the Round, special interest was devoted to the new themes that are included in the GATT negotiations for the first time, such as the services sector and agriculture. Biannual reports on the evolution of the world economy and international economic relations were prepared and distributed to a wide public.

79. Since primary products still provide the major part of Latin American export proceeds, studies were carried out on the commodity exchanges of London (metals), Chicago (grains), and New York (tropical products), in order to determine their role in the forming of prices, especially of futures.

80. Two studies on economic relations with Japan and one on economic relations with the socialist countries of Eastern Europe were completed and distributed. Another was started covering the European Economic Community.

81. In the area of economic integration and regional co-operation, a study was elaborated on the nature of the Andean Parliament as a permanent organ of the Pact. Special attention was devoted to Bolivia as a less developed country in order to facilitate its access to the regional market.

82. In the sphere of development financing, a number of studies, prepared to provide new insights into the determinants of domestic savings and the role of the financing institutions in the allocation of resources for investment in selected countries, proved to be highly useful for the design of macro-economic and monetary policies.

83. In the field of natural resources, ECLAC continued to support the Latin American Mining Organization (OLAMI) in developing its work programmes, especially the second phase of the ECLAC/OLAMI Regional Mining Information System (INFOMIN). In water resources, the most noteworthy achievement was the creation of a network of training activities under the leadership of the ECLAC Water Resource Unit to develop and execute training programmes for water resources.

84. A rational approach, from the economic point of view, to the administration of energy demand and the promotion of new and renewable energy sources was promoted. A biennial report on the efficiency and future development of the energy system of the Central American countries was completed; the interrelationships between Mexican economic development and the evolution of the energy sector were studied; and statistical programmes for the use of the Governments of the region were prepared.

85. The ECLAC population programme, carried out by the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), emphasized the multidisciplinary approach of its activities, working more closely with national institutions in the design of sectoral policies that focused on less favoured groups of the population. CELADE developed microcomputer technologies to help the countries of the region in the implementation of systems to obtain disaggregated population and housing data. Likewise, the development of a computerized programme to manage geographical information systems (GIS) was initiated to manage cartographic data and multidisciplinary variables such as pollution levels, use of the land and poverty indicators.

86. Assistance was given to the Central American countries, within the framework of the Esquipulas II agreement and in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to help in the solution of the problems faced by displaced populations in Central America.

87. In the social development programme, the main line of activity was to describe and interpret some principal aspects of social changes in order to establish future trends and assist Member Governments in the design of policies that would contribute to mitigating the most negative effects of such changes and to lay the groundwork for a positive reorientation of economic and social development.

88. The main activities related to the integration of women in development centred on the repercussions of the economic and social crisis, changes in the status of women, the employment situation of women, rural women, demographic changes, legislative reforms since 1980 and information systems.

89. As regards the ECLAC programme on statistics, the setting up and strengthening of computerized data banks in the field of national accounts, international trade and social statistics has reached a highly advanced stage. These data banks have permitted the preparation of statistical publications, which have been widely distributed in the region and to international organizations and the academic community, as well as the elaboration of pioneering studies on extreme poverty, the situation of children and youth, and women and development.

90. In the field of transport, ECLAC continued supporting the railway information system, in conjunction with the Latin American Railways Association (ALAF), as well as research into the impact of subsidies and different forms of control on the organization of public transport systems. Regarding the improvement of transport systems through technical co-operation, assistance was provided to the Meeting of Ministers of Public Works and Transport of the Southern Cone countries and to the Board of the Cartagena Agreement (JUNAC) with respect to conventions on international land transport and on the limitation of civil liability in the overland transport of freight. With respect to land-locked countries, it is worth mentioning that ECLAC was instrumental in negotiating a customs transit agreement between Bolivia and Peru and acted in an advisory capacity in similar negotiations between Bolivia and Paraguay.

D. Economic Commission for Africa

91. The activities described below were carried out by ECA during the period 11 April 1989 to 19 May 1990.

92. In the field of industrial policy and planning, ECA activities included the preparation of technical publications, as well as the preparation and servicing of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the Whole on Industrialization in Africa and the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI), held from 22 to 31 May 1989 at Harare. Technical publications were among the documents considered by the Experts. These publications were prepared with a view to addressing two basic issues at present facing African industry, namely the industrialization of installed industrial capacity and industrial protection policies. With regard to the first issue, it was revealed that the main weakness of Africa's industries is in the areas of planning, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, supply of equipment and other inputs, manpower and management.

93. Emphasis on the development and promotion of small-scale industries continued and a portfolio of project profiles on small-scale industrial projects for entrepreneurs was prepared and submitted to a regional seminar for entrepreneurs engaged in agro- and agro-allied small-scale industries, held at Abidjan from 11 to 15 September 1989.

94. Another important area on which the secretariat focused its attention was the need for the promotion of domestic and intra-African trade.

95. As a follow-up to the guidelines and recommendations spelt out in the Lagos Plan of Action, the secretariat prepared a technical publication on consumer goods and marketing channels to promote domestic production and trade in African countries. The publication was intended to help member States, especially senior officials in ministries of trade, to identify problems and adopt policy measures to improve marketing channels for consumer goods, and optimize the role of domestic trade in the development process of their countries. A study entitled "alternative patterns of domestic trade structures and mechanisms for the establishment of more rational distribution channels" was prepared and submitted to the Conference of Ministers of Trade, highlighting the policy options for improving the domestic

trade structure of member countries. The secretariat also undertook activities to assist member States in designing, adopting and implementing policies and measures aimed at promoting and expanding intra-African trade and trade with non-African countries.

96. ECA also took steps towards the implementation of the Substantial Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries. To this end, a review of the decade in Africa and policy issues for the 1990s evaluated the national action taken by the African least developed countries, international support measures in terms of volume of ODA transfer, ODA modalities, and debt relief.

97. The Commission, emphasizing its social policy, planning and research in the preparation for the meeting of the Fifth Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs, prepared two working documents, namely "ECA report on social development activities during the period between April 1985 and September 1989" and "Summary of social trends and major social development problems in Africa". The first document dealt with four main issues: social policy; planning and research; integrated rural development; and women, youth and social welfare. It highlighted the major preoccupations in these areas and the priorities of ECA in its attempt to make an impact on social development. The second document summarized the characteristics of the decade of the 1980s within the socio-economic framework. It pointed out how the gains of the 1960s and 1970s had been eroded in the 1980s by economic recession, natural disasters and civil and political strife, as well as by structural imbalances that were exacerbated by orthodox structural adjustment programmes.

98. The Commission, in collaboration with African and international non-governmental organizations, and other United Nations organizations convened the International Conference on Popular Participation at Arusha from 12 to 16 February 1990. The convening of the Conference was initiated by the General Assembly debate on the mid-term review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in 1988, which accorded crucial importance to the involvement of people in the design of policies and programmes for recovery and development. The Conference, which adopted the theme "Putting People First", was attended by over 500 participants representing African non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, Governments, United Nations organizations, international non-governmental organizations and donor organizations. The Conference adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, which outlines the strategy for enhancing the people's participation in Africa's recovery and development process.

99. As far as the programme on the integration of women in development is concerned, the secretariat continued to enhance the inclusion of women in the mainstream of development. To this end, a guide on the incorporation of women's concerns in national development plans was developed for planners and decision makers. The secretariat also issued the "Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in the 1990s", which highlights the extent to which the Arusha Strategies have been implemented, sets specific targets in all sectors of activities and shows relevant measures to be taken at national, subregional, regional and international levels for the achievement of those targets.

100. In the field of agriculture, the secretariat continued its efforts to improve national competence in agricultural planning and policy formulation. To this end a seminar was organized for the countries covered by the Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (MULPOC) based at Yaoundé. The specific objective of the seminar was the enhancement of the countries' capacities in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural investment programmes and projects.

101. As a basis for the promotion of food security, the secretariat undertook a study on the development and improvement of agricultural data in the Niamey-based MULPOC countries. The findings of the study were highlighted in a report submitted to the 1990 meeting of the Niamey MULPOC. The main emphasis of the study was an early warning system, which necessitated reliable data on such parameters as size of crop harvest, weather variability, soil moisture content and amount of rainfall.

102. In the field of general and multimodal transport, technical publications on guidelines for the design and implementation of manpower development policies and programmes were prepared and submitted to government ministries responsible for the development of manpower programmes in multimodal transport. The document stressed the need for the development of indigenous multimodal transport operations in Africa.

103. In an effort to increase awareness of the importance of road maintenance, the secretariat, jointly with OECD, organized the Second African Road Safety Conference at Addis Ababa. The Conference focused on the ever-increasing accident rate in Africa and recommended road safety measures to alleviate the problem. In railway subsectors, ECA prepared and submitted to all African railways a document on commercial aspects for development and management for door-to-door techniques in railway transport services. As for air transport, ECA prepared a report on the status of the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Declaration in each subregion. The report contains a series of recommendations concerning the harmonization of air-transport policies.

104. During the period under review, activities in public administration, human resources planning, development and utilization focused on education and training for development, on manpower and employment planning and policies and on training courses.

105. With regard to public administration, the secretariat, in an advisory capacity, collaborated with member States in organizing and developing a series of training courses and programmes.

106. In education and training for development, a national seminar for non-formal education and extension, personnel, methods, techniques and strategies for improving non-formal education delivery capabilities in rural areas was held at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, from 1 to 7 October 1989. The seminar reviewed and identified common problems among government ministries and non-governmental organizations in evolving necessary strategies for national mass education, with a view to finding a lasting solution to illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and superstition.

107. In the area of strengthening regional co-operation in human resources development, an advisory services mission was undertaken in October/November 1989 on the development of programmes and operational aspects of the African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research based at Nairobi. The three-man mission visited six countries (Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Zaire and Zambia) where discussions were held with government officials responsible for higher and technical education.

108. The major projects of the secretariat responding to the needs of national statistical services continued to include the Statistical Development Programme for Africa (SDPA) and the Regional Advisory Service in Demographic Statistics (RASDS). Under SDPA, 42 missions were undertaken: 23 missions to 14 African countries in the field of household surveys; 12 missions to 11 African countries in the field of statistical training; 6 missions to 3 African countries in the field of national accounts and 1 mission in the field of statistical data base development. As regards the RASDS, 65 missions were undertaken to 33 African countries in the fields of census organization, census cartography, data processing, civil registration and vital statistics collection and sampling for censuses and demographic surveys.

109. During the period under review, the secretariat's activities in the field of population focused on three subprogrammes, as in previous years: (a) population policies and development planning; (b) demographic analysis in the context of economic and social development; and (c) regional training and research.

110. Assistance to member States in population-related activities continued to be given special attention and emphasis by the secretariat through regional advisory services. The nature of assistance provided to member States varied, but included the following: evaluation and analysis of census or survey data, preparation of tabulation, evaluation and analysis plans and preparation of census questionnaires. The countries which benefited from such assistance were: Benin, Cameroon, the Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, the Niger, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

111. ECA continued its programme to promote and strengthen subregional economic co-operation and integration, which constitutes the thrust of MULPOC activities.

112. During the period under review, the five MULPOCs produced together about 50 outputs covering the organization of meetings and the preparation of studies. The MULPOCs have also rendered advisory services to intergovernmental organizations in order to identify projects of co-operation at the subregional level within the framework of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. Apart from activities which are common to all, the MULPOCs also undertook activities of specific interest to their respective subregions - for example, migratory labour in southern Africa, the viability of irrigation schemes of the Niger and Mano River Valley in West Africa, lake transport for the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) subregion, and non-recorded border trade for the Yaoundé MULPOC subregion.

113. In order to overcome the obstacle of lack of ready access to the information needed for development planning, the Pan-African Development Information System mounted a series of activities during the period under review, which included the delivery of training, advisory services and other forms of technical co-operation of ECA member States on information management and development; it undertook data-base development and network-building, provided user services and serviced legislative and other meetings, including expert groups; it undertook studies and issued publications, all of which aimed at information development in the region.

114. In the field of science and technology, the secretariat continued to focus on three main areas: strengthening policies and institutions for science and technology, development of manpower for science and technology, and the promotion of co-operation amongst member States in scientific and technological activities. It organized the sixth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Science and Technology Development, held at Addis Ababa from 6 to 9 November 1989.

115. As for cartography, remote sensing and mineral resources, the secretariat provided technical support and advisory services to member States and intergovernmental organizations and prepared studies for them. Thus, advisory services were provided to the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing at Nairobi, and a study on the exploitation of Trona in Chad and an evaluation of the Central African Mineral Resources Development Centre were carried out. Advisory services in water resources were also provided to Lesotho on the implementation of its highlands water project.

116. The ECA programme on the environment in Africa focused on development of environmental capabilities, including conservation of resources and pollution control. Within this context, member States were assisted in establishing institutional mechanisms to monitor environmental degradation resulting from development activities.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

117. In pursuing its efforts to promote development and co-operation among countries of the region, ESCWA witnessed confirmation of a trend in this direction: following the establishment of the Gulf Co-operation Council in 1981, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Yemen set up the Arab Co-operation Council in 1989. Signalling the return of Egypt to the Arab economic and political arena, this event took place against a background of firming oil prices, post-war reconstruction in Iraq, considerable economic and social problems in various parts of the region and continuing strife in Lebanon and the occupied Arab territories. In compliance with Commission resolution 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987, no Commission session was held in 1990, nor did the Technical Committee meet. However, the Advisory Body established in accordance with ESCWA resolution 175 (XV), of 18 May 1989, comprising the heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Iraq, met twice and proved to be instrumental in enhancing the close co-operation between ESCWA and member countries.

118. Since the fifteenth session of the Commission, numerous contacts have taken place with national, regional and international entities outside the United Nations system to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination. The Executive Secretary undertook missions to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic and intends to visit the other member States also. In Democratic Yemen, this led to an understanding to undertake exploratory studies on the creation of a unified monetary system between that country and Yemen on the reinstatement of Aden as a duty-free zone and on privatization. These contacts resulted in agreements with member countries and the Arab Co-operation Council on the formulation and programming of joint projects; the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) on the National Household Survey Capability Programme; the Islamic Development Bank concerning a project on the assessment of water resources in the ESCWA region through the use of remote-sensing techniques; and the International Council for Building Research and Documentation in the field of housing, building and planning.

119. Such contacts also resulted in memoranda of understanding envisaging co-operation with the Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation; the Arab Organization for Atomic Energy on the peaceful uses of atomic energy; the General Arab Federation of Fish Producers in the development of fisheries; and with the Regional Union for Agricultural Credit in the Near East and North Africa, the Regional Centre for Agricultural Reform and Rural Development in the Near East and the Regional Union of Food Marketing Institutions in the Near East and North Africa in common areas of activity.

120. In addition, joint activities were agreed upon with Arab League bodies and other regional institutions, including the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Executive Council of Arab Ministers on the Environment.

121. In carrying out its work programme, the secretariat of the Commission has continued its efforts to enhance co-operation with other parts of the United Nations system. The Executive Secretary served as a member of the Steering Committee for the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in March 1990; equally active involvement by ESCWA is envisaged in the follow-up. Workshops were organized on agricultural project analysis and credit management, using computer packages prepared by FAO. To UNCTAD preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Paris in September 1990, ESCWA contributed a report on the progress made during the 1980s in implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries in Democratic Yemen and Yemen. In November 1989, ESCWA signed a memorandum of understanding with UNEP agreeing on the framework for a new programme of joint activities concerning the environment. A memorandum of understanding to co-operate was also signed with the International Institute on Aging.

122. ESCWA resolution 177 (XV) of 18 May 1989 provided for a meeting of government development experts from member countries to be convened so that the experts could collaborate with the secretariat in the preparation of a report reflecting the priorities and objectives of member countries within the framework of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade. The meeting, expanded to include development experts from all Arab

countries, was held from 22 to 24 January 1990 at Baghdad, in close co-operation with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) and the Iraqi Fund for External Development. The experts identified 10 main elements as appropriate objectives and priorities.

123. In the context of enhancing regional co-operation, ESCWA has continued to undertake technical assistance co-operation activities in the region through the provision of short-term regional advisory services and the monitoring and substantive support of technical assistance projects as executing or associate agency. In this endeavour, ESCWA, in co-operation with UNDP, has carried out projects for the promotion of industrial entrepreneurship and for the establishment of engineering infrastructure, the latter jointly with the Arab Industrial Development Organization (AIDO). Within the framework of the regular programme of regional advisory services, assistance to member States has continued in the areas of agriculture; industrial project identification, formulation and appraisal; water resources development; science and technology; human resources development; data processing; national accounts and statistical services; energy; and transport and communications.

124. A high professional vacancy rate in the substantive programmes of ESCWA (ranging from 10 per cent to 75 per cent) continued to have a bearing on performance during the biennium, as did, to a lesser extent, nine outputs carried over from the previous biennium. In the light of this situation, and given the obsolescence of some projected outputs, the Commission on 18 May 1989, adopted resolution 164 (XV) approving a number of modifications in the programme of work for 1988-1989. Against that background and taking into consideration outputs added by legislation and at the initiative of the secretariat, the implementation rate was 69 per cent. Although this would doubtless have been higher under less adverse conditions than those prevailing, particularly during the first year of the biennium, the rate achieved is considered commensurate with the circumstances. Furthermore, apart from the projects referred to earlier, programmed technical assistance activities were undertaken in agriculture, the environment, population, social development and statistics. A number of the Commission's activities are highlighted below.

125. Under the food and agriculture programme a project document prepared for a study on strengthening and co-ordinating agricultural planning and policy formulation among Arab Co-operation Council (ACC) countries has established a framework for future activities in the field of co-ordination of agricultural plans in ACC countries and any other economic grouping in the region.

126. Under the development issues and policies programme, the annual survey of economic and social developments in the region was issued, providing a comprehensive analysis of economic performance at the national, regional and subregional levels. In addition, 1989 saw the completion of a study of the region's medium-term development prospects. The least developed countries of the region continued to receive special attention.

127. Environmental considerations were incorporated in the draft medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 and the programme of work for the biennium 1990-1991.

Preparations for the regional and global conferences on the environment to be convened in 1991 and 1992 have begun.

128. Under the human settlements programme, periodical updating of a data base for the human settlements situation in the region is expected to be completed by September 1990.

129. The Joint ESCWA/UNIDO Industry Division completed a technical publication in the "Industrial Development Series" on the role of regional co-operation in industrial development, making recommendations with regard to GCC and ACC countries. Topics covered by publications in the area of micro-electronics and informatics included the status and perspectives of electronic industries in the Arab countries, the requirements for the establishment of an expandable computerized Arabic dictionary and the proceedings of the first Arab conference on perspectives of modern biotechnologies. A number of conferences have been and are being sponsored with UNIDO, UNESCO and national bodies, among others.

130. As part of its monitoring of the external trade and payments situation of countries of the region, ESCWA, under the international trade programme, issued annual technical publications in 1988 and 1989. It also prepared a technical publication identifying new export industries and analysing problems and policies affecting export performance.

131. The natural resources programme has continued to stress issues highlighted in the Mar del Plata Action Plan for the development, conservation and management of water resources: establishment of a data base, application of new technologies to the study of ground-water basins, and training. In November 1989, an ad hoc expert group meeting was held on water security in the region, which recommended the establishment of a regional water resources council.

132. As a basis for the monitoring of energy-related activities and developments in the ESCWA region under the energy issues programme, the annual print-outs of energy data issued again for 1988 and 1989 are intended to lead to the establishment of an energy data bank. A companion publication is the Survey and Assessment of Energy-related Activities and Developments in the ESCWA Region". Recent developments in the oil market received due attention, as did new and renewable sources of energy.

133. Through the publication of the Demographic and Related Socio-economic Data Sheets as Assessed in 1988, issue No. 6, the population programme has produced and disseminated reliable data on a large number of demographic and related socio-economic variables necessary for development planning and policy-making. The Population Bulletin of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia has continued to appear as a recurrent publication. The Commission also published a trilingual demographic dictionary. ESCWA has finally been selected as a POPLINE CD-ROM site, as part of the world's largest population data base. In the area of employment promotion and manpower development, a fully computerized labour force data base was finalized, to be updated on a continuous basis.

134. Current developments and trends in the monetary and financial sectors of the economies of the ESCWA region were the subject of a technical publication of the public administration and finance programme in 1988 and in 1989.

135. In the science and technology programme, co-operation continues with national, regional and international institutions, including the Centre for Science and Technology for Development of the United Nations Secretariat, UNIDO, the Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology and Development and the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils (FASRC).

136. A major activity of the social development programme during the biennium 1988-1989 was the organization of a Conference on the Capabilities and Needs of Disabled Persons, in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Development of the Government of Jordan, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Welfare of the Blind, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND).

137. In statistics, the third meeting of heads of central statistical organizations in the region took place at ESCWA headquarters in 1989. A number of joint activities were undertaken with Arab regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics and the Arab Monetary Fund.

138. Following an intergovernmental/inter-agency meeting in December 1988 and ESCWA's fifteenth session, in 1989, an umbrella project document covering the remaining five years of the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994) was submitted to the United Nations Development Programme for financing. The agreement on transport co-operation signed between ESCWA and the League of Arab States in 1988 has led to increased joint activity, particularly as regards the Decade and the transport strategy for the Arab world.

III. MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

139. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1823 (XVII) and Economic and Social Council resolution 1817 (LV) by which the Secretary-General was requested to submit annual reports on the meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions to the Council at its summer sessions. Since the Council's second regular session of 1989, the executive secretaries have held a meeting chaired by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, at ESCWA headquarters at Baghdad, from 21 to 23 May 1990. The present report reflects the main issues discussed at that meeting.

A. Review of the outcome of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to international economic co-operation, and of the preparations for the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade

140. The Meeting discussed the outcome of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly. It welcomed the fact that the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries (resolution S-18/3), had been adopted by consensus without any dissenting views being recorded. Although initially there had been considerable disagreement among the various groups, during the final plenary session there was a convergence of views resulting in the unanimous acceptance of the Declaration.

141. The Meeting noted that there were different assessments among Governments on the significance of the Declaration adopted at the special session. If indeed the special session could pave the way for reviving the stalled North-South dialogue, then an important watershed in economic relations had been reached. The Meeting therefore recommended that there should be a Secretariat-wide analysis leading to an understanding of the orientation of the special session, perhaps at the next senior officials meeting. The Meeting regretted that the results of the special session had not received adequate coverage in the mass media.

142. The Meeting noted that organizations of the United Nations system should review the Declaration in order to promote the implementation of the recommendations contained therein. In particular, the regional commissions should be instrumental in effecting the regional economic integration emphasized in the Declaration as an important means to expand trade and investment.

143. The Meeting discussed the preparations for the International Development Strategy. As requested at the third resumed session in March 1990 of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole for the Preparation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, had prepared a working document for consideration by the Committee at its fourth session, from 4 to 22 June 1990 (A/AC.232/9). The document followed the outline adopted in General Assembly resolution 44/169 on the preparation of the International Development Strategy. It also employed the language of the Declaration emanating from the special session. On the need for a mid-term review of the Strategy the Meeting was informed that no decision had yet been taken on the mechanism for review. The Meeting emphasized the importance of regional commissions in the preparatory process and monitoring of the International Development Strategy.

B. Environmental issues

1. Co-operation between regional commissions and the United Nations Environment Programme

144. The Meeting resumed the dialogue between the executive heads of the regional commissions and UNEP which took place under the chairmanship of the Director-General in July 1989 at Geneva. To prepare for the discussions, the senior officials of the regional commissions and UNEP responsible for environmental matters met at Geneva under the chairmanship of the office of the Director-General in March 1990.

145. The Meeting noted the close co-operation between the regional commissions and UNEP, which dated back to the 1970s when the regional commissions had received strong support from UNEP. Over the years, such co-operation had in some cases weakened. The Meeting emphasized the co-ordinating role of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) and stressed the need to implement CPC decisions on specific issues of co-ordination. At the secretariat level, the Meeting reaffirmed that the Director-General was responsible for co-ordination.

146. The Meeting agreed that co-operation among United Nations entities should be strengthened, particularly between the regional commissions and UNEP, to serve member States better in the interrelated issues of environment and development that were of high priority for the agenda of the 1990s. The following concrete proposals were adopted:

(a) The regional commissions and UNEP should strengthen the exchange of information on each other's activities on a regular basis, thereby promoting complementarity and avoiding possible duplication. In areas of common interest, the entities should take better advantage of each other's expertise and perspectives;

(b) On administrative arrangements, the Executive Director of UNEP should follow up with each executive secretary to strengthen co-operation through the following measures:

(i) Joint review and programming should be undertaken by UNEP and the regional commissions on a regular basis to ensure close co-operation between them. Such exercises could, if necessary, lead to joint units/divisions;

(ii) On the question of relocating UNEP regional offices to the headquarters of the regional commissions, the Meeting noted the assurance given by the Executive Director of UNEP to relocate the UNEP regional offices in Africa and Western Asia to the headquarters of ECA and ESCWA;

(iii) The regional commissions' participation in Designated Officials on Environmental Matters activities should be further strengthened;

(iv) UNEP should actively assist regional commissions in regional preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992 in Brazil;

(c) Dialogue at the executive level should be continued on a regular basis. In that connection, an informal meeting would be organized by the Director-General in the first week of July at the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council.

2. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

147. The Meeting discussed the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It was briefed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on the current state of those preparations. The Meeting noted that the secretariat of the Conference, with headquarters at Geneva, and units in New York and Nairobi, had established very close working relationships with the United Nations Environment Programme, the Director-General, UNDP and other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. This is particularly true for the preparation of the overview paper for the Nairobi session of the Preparatory Committee in August 1990, describing the activities of the United Nations system within the nine priority areas to be addressed by the Conference.

148. The discussions focused on the regional preparatory meetings and the inputs they would provide for the Conference. The Meeting noted that there was a distinction between meetings as a follow-up to the Brundtland report (A/42/427) and the regional preparatory meetings for the Conference. In the ECE region, the recently concluded Conference "Action for a Common Future" meeting at Bergen, Norway, from 14 to 16 May 1990, had served both purposes. The preparations for the Bergen Conference had been very complex and were subsequently known as the Bergen process. The Conference had produced two important documents, the Bergen Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development in the ECE Region and a Joint Agenda for Action.

149. ECA had held its meeting as a follow-up to the Brundtland report at Kampala in 1989. Although the conclusions of the meeting would be relevant to the Conference, ECA would hold at Cairo a separate preparatory meeting for the 1992 Conference, preceded by subregional meetings to add a subregional dimension to the Conference. ESCWA was convening a regional preparatory meeting, to take place in February 1991, in co-operation with the Council of Arab Ministers for Environment; this would include Arab countries in Africa. The Meeting agreed that the ESCWA meeting should be co-ordinated with the ECA preparatory meeting.

150. ESCAP would convene a ministerial meeting on environment at Bangkok from 10 to 16 October 1990. The central issue of the Conference was the formulation of a regional strategy for environment. A meeting of senior officials for the purpose of providing an input to the 1992 Conference would be convened in August 1991.

151. ECLAC was organizing a technical meeting of governmental experts, to be held at its headquarters at Santiago in September 1990, as a follow-up to the Brundtland report. An intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the 1992 Conference was scheduled for May 1991.

152. Given the scheduling of those preparatory meetings, it would be difficult, except in the case of the Bergen Conference, to provide inputs to the second preparatory session at Geneva in March/April 1991, as stipulated in the decision of the organizational committee. It would be preferable for the target date to be set for the third session of the committee at Geneva in August/September 1991.

153. The Meeting agreed that regional preparatory meetings were only one aspect of the continuing partnership between the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the regional commissions, and that the process of interaction between the entities should continue until the Conference in 1992. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the statement of the Secretary-General of the Conference on the fund-raising role of the Conference secretariat and expressed the hope that the regional commissions would be assisted by the secretariat in seeking extrabudgetary funding for the preparatory meetings to supplement the funds allocated by the General Assembly.

C. Interregional co-operation

1. Transport

154. The Meeting agreed that the area of transport, whether by sea, air, road or rail, by its very nature was particularly suitable for interregional co-operation, as transportation routes straddled continents and regions. Furthermore, in the area of land transport there was no global body and the competence of regional commissions in that area was unquestioned. The Meeting recalled that in 1988 the regional commissions had elaborated an interregional project on transport.

155. The Meeting recognized that many interregional projects, including joint seminars between two commissions, had already been carried out. The Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific covered both ESCAP and ESCWA and interregional co-operation between the two commissions should be strengthened during the second part of the Decade. There was also an ongoing project on the link between Africa and Europe through the Strait of Gibraltar.

156. The Meeting agreed that the standing meeting of transport directors of the regional commissions should be convened to explore further possibilities for co-operation. Improved port management, in particular the computerization thereof, multimodal transport and co-operation in the railway sector were areas which merited special consideration. The Meeting noted that ESCAP had already undertaken a preliminary investigation on rail-cum-sea transport routes between Europe and the ESCAP region and that ECLAC had developed a project in interregional co-operation in multimodal transport and trade facilitation; the two commissions should co-operate in that regard. The special role of ECE was emphasized as a centre of the transport system and a source of technology and resources.

2. Trade facilitation

157. The Meeting approved the project document on interregional co-operation developed by the trade directors of the regional commissions in full co-operation with UNCTAD. The document would be presented to the Economic and Social Council for its approval as requested in its resolution 1989/118 (see sect. IV, below).

158. The Meeting was informed of the widespread support for the project given by member States in all five regional commissions. The Meeting further noted that the project document had also received endorsement from UNCTAD. The Meeting discussed the modalities for follow-up. Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/118 had stipulated that UNDP and other funding sources should be consulted for the implementation of the project. The Director-General offered his good services to convey the project to UNDP.

D. The role of the regional commissions in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-ravaged countries

159. The Meeting continued the discussion initiated the previous year at Santiago on the role that regional commissions could play in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-ravaged countries. Two major developments had taken place since then. The Meeting noted the increasing importance of the United Nations in the political arena in such areas as Namibia and Central America. Similar success of the United Nations system had still to be paralleled in the economic and social fields. Secondly, with the dissipation of the cold war, more attention should be devoted to rehabilitation of war-ravaged areas, a persisting problem in the developing countries in various regions of the world.

160. The Meeting recalled that ECE and ESCAP had been established with the specific mandate of dealing with the reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-ravaged countries. The Meeting agreed that regional commissions could and should play an important role in solving the concerns of the aftermath of all conflicts, in particular when the reconstruction of a particular country or countries was being addressed.

E. Preparations for the 1994 Conference on Population

161. The Meeting discussed the preparations for the 1994 Conference on Population. It was informed that the Executive Director of UNFPA had been designated Secretary-General of the Conference and the Director of the Population Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs as his Deputy. The forthcoming Conference would differ from previous conferences in that it would not confine itself to technical issues but would also consider the question of population within a wider context, such as population and environment, human resources development, human rights and other issues. It was envisaged that regional inputs would play an important role in the Conference. The Meeting was also briefed on the status of the preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in September 1990 in Paris.

F. Agency support costs: successor arrangements

162. The Meeting expressed concern over the continuing controversy and uncertainty regarding future arrangements over support costs. It noted that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), in its decision 1990/4 had stated that more time and more analysis were needed before decisions were taken. The continued uncertainty was, of course, very unsettling for the regional commissions. Though in terms of the size of execution the regional commissions accounted for a relatively small proportion of the overall resources of UNDP, those invariably constituted the single largest source of their extrabudgetary funding for implementation of inter-country and regional projects. That fact underlined the significance of the proposed arrangement for the future of the regional commissions as executing agencies and for fulfilling their mandates under various General Assembly resolutions, including 32/197, 33/202 and 34/206.

163. It was agreed that the regional commissions would address a joint letter to the Secretary-General through the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation to express their concern, with a view to ascertaining what the future role of the regional commissions as executing agencies would be. As a broader concern, the Meeting felt that whatever decision was taken would have profound implications on the whole United Nations system, and that all possible options should therefore be considered with utmost care.

G. Paper on the regional dimension of development in the 1990s

164. The Meeting noted that the scope of the report on the role of the regional commissions in development in the 1990s, requested by CCSQ(OPS) (Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational)) at its April 1989 session had since been broadened to encompass the regional dimension of the entire United Nations system. At the CCSQ(OPS) meeting held at Geneva on 2-5 April 1990, a second version of the joint paper entitled "Regional dimensions of development" was discussed (ACC/1990/OP/CRP.6). In light of that discussion, the Office of the Director-General, in close collaboration with the regional commissions, would now engage in the elaboration of the study on the regional dimension of development. This study would require the co-operation of all other organizations and agencies to reflect the widened scope of the paper.

H. Date and place of next session

165. The Meeting, taking into account the standing invitation of the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, and the Executive Head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, decided to hold its next spring meeting at Vienna. The dates were still to be determined. The duration of the next meeting would be two and a half days, one day to be devoted to social issues, another day to the other issues commonly discussed at those meetings and one half-day to discussions with UNIDO.

IV. INTERREGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN TRADE FACILITATION

166. The Economic and Social Council, in paragraph 1 of its resolution 1989/118, invited the regional commissions to formulate, jointly with UNCTAD, a draft proposal for interregional co-operation in trade facilitation. In pursuance of this resolution, the regional commissions, in co-operation with UNCTAD, developed the following project proposal for approval by the Council. Meanwhile, the project proposal was presented to the respective commission sessions meeting in the first half of 1990, where it received widespread support from member Governments, as witnessed among others by resolution 693(XXV) adopted by the Conference of Ministers of ECA at Tripoli (see part I of the present report). It is presented in the form of a UNDP project document to facilitate the submission to UNDP and other possible donors, as stipulated in paragraph 2 of the Council resolution.

Draft proposal for interregional co-operation in the area of trade facilitation, and in particular the phased application, wherever appropriate, of the Rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT)

I. The Project

A. Context

One truth that has been reiterated for virtually all countries, developed and developing, during the 1980s is that foreign trade is vital to their continued well-being. However, simply the desire to trade with other countries is not sufficient to ensure that such transactions will take place. Most products are supplied by more than one country, which must compete with each other for markets. Therefore, nations wishing to promote the growth of their foreign trade must make every effort to ensure that their products remain competitive.

Although many activities designed to improve competitiveness are themselves competitive in nature, there is one in which government, industry and individuals can combine their efforts to the benefit of all concerned. This activity, known as facilitation, consists of the simplification, minimization and, where possible, standardization of those governmental and institutional procedures, formalities and requirements which not only place financial and economic burdens on the free flow of goods and transport but may actually prevent commerce from taking place. Ultimately, the goal is to rationalize the management of physical distribution systems that often cut across national boundaries and practices. To accomplish this goal, national, regional and even global efforts must be made to permit or expedite the logistics of trade and transport.

The original focus of facilitation activities was largely on the documents in which procedures, formalities and requirements have traditionally been manifested. In recent years, however, there has been an increasing tendency for paper documents to be replaced in trade among developed countries by electronic messages exchanged by trading partners on a computer-to-computer basis. This electronic data

interchange (EDI) greatly speeds up the transmission of information required by both private industry and public agencies regarding trade and transport operations, thereby reducing costs and simplifying the communications process. EDI thus constitutes an important form of facilitation that the developing countries should take greater advantage of in order to increase the competitiveness of their products.

B. Project justification

Although facilitation has been successfully institutionalized for many years in the developed countries, few in the developing world have made adequate progress in applying this concept to the elimination of procedural impediments to trade and transport such as excessive paperwork, complicated administrative requirements, lack of common working hours at border crossings, and the like. Conscious of the global importance of facilitation for improving the international trade of these countries, the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1989/118 called for the regional commissions, jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to formulate a project of interregional co-operation in this area that would promote the reduction, simplification and harmonization of formalities, procedures and documentation.

The project will have four components:

(a) Training;

(b) Establishing networks of facilitation activities;

(c) Promoting and implementing the Rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT);

(d) Fostering regional participation in global facilitation work.

Each component will comprise certain activities of a global nature, as well as regional activities dealing with aspects that are unique to each of the developing areas falling under the responsibility of one of the regional commissions.

Neither the regional commissions nor UNCTAD can provide from their regular budgets the resources required to achieve the objectives of the project. It is thus necessary to seek external funding for resources adequate to permit a quantum increase in the level of activities that the developing countries dedicate to the facilitation of trade and transport logistics.

International leadership in facilitation activities has traditionally been exercised by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), in association with UNCTAD's Trade Facilitation Programme (FALPRO). Following this same scheme, the global activities of the project will be executed by ECE with the collaboration of UNCTAD/FALPRO, as appropriate. Each of the four regional commissions for developing areas will execute its own regional activities, under the general co-ordination and, as appropriate, with the participation of ECE. Great care will

be taken to harmonize all these activities with other projects being carried out by UNDP, the World Bank and other international agencies that provide technical assistance.

C. Development objectives

The project has two development objectives. One is to foster improvements in general facilitation techniques employed by individual countries for the simplification, minimization and, where possible, standardization of procedures, formalities and requirements associated with the logistics of international trade and transport. This is the principal focus of regional activities, which must be carried out in a somewhat different manner depending on the specific characteristics and requirements of the various developing areas. UNCTAD is also involved in achieving this objective through its support of focal-point staff from the economic commissions in developing regions.

The other development objective is to globalize the application of electronic data interchange, especially as it is manifested in EDIFACT. Accomplishment of this objective will be carried out by ECE jointly with the other regional commissions and with UNCTAD. Furthermore, all regional activities seek to promote the EDI concept and the use of EDIFACT standards in the facilitation of trade and transport logistics in the individual countries.

The ultimate objective of the project is to use facilitation as a means of improving the market position of exports from the developing countries. By simplifying, minimizing and, where possible, standardizing those governmental and institutional procedures, formalities and requirements that constitute obstacles to the international free flow of goods, a reduction in the cost of these goods will be achieved, thereby making them more competitive in world markets.

D. Immediate objectives, outputs and activities

COMPONENT I. TRAINING

OBJECTIVE 1: PROVIDE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WITH EDUCATIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATERIALS ON FACILITATION

Outputs

(a) Visual education materials in the form of video cassettes, in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The video sequences will also be available without sound, so that other languages can be dubbed in as required;

(b) A manual, in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, describing how national facilitation committees can be organized;

(c) A manual, in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, describing what steps national facilitation committees can take to accomplish specific goals in order to permit or expedite the logistics of international trade and transport.

Global activities

Experts from the ECE and UNCTAD/FALPRO will collaborate in preparing these materials and the other regional economic commissions will be consulted, more particularly on outputs (b) and (c). Most video sequences should be obtainable from film-clip libraries, which will substantially reduce production costs.

Regional activities

The trade facilitation focal points will collaborate with ECE and UNCTAD/FALPRO in the dissemination of prepared materials to parties concerned in the region.

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN FACILITATION CAPABILITIES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

Outputs

Training in facilitation of focal-point staff of the regional economic commissions in developing areas.

Global activities

Experts from UNCTAD/FALPRO and the ECE will give initial training to focal-point staff and provide them with continuing support. The presence of this staff will afford the commissions an opportunity to build up their own expertise in facilitation.

Regional activities

Arrangements will be made for:

(a) Travel to Geneva by focal-point personnel and commission staff involved in trade facilitation work for training and orientation;

(b) Travel from Geneva by ECE focal-point staff to assist focal-point personnel from other commissions, as required.

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN FACILITATION

Outputs

Roving workshops on facilitation.

General regional activities

The regional economic commissions will organize workshops in the individual countries of their areas, which will be presented by regional focal-point staff in collaboration with experts from ECE and UNCTAD/FALPRO and from national facilitation committees in other countries (principally in Europe) that have achieved an outstanding degree of success in this field, in order to:

(a) Train national personnel and representatives of subregional and regional organizations in identifying and defining the scope of facilitation requirements and constraints;

(b) Provide them with specific skills in the methods and techniques of facilitation;

(c) Enhance their knowledge of global-level facilitation work being carried out by the ECE and UNCTAD/FALPRO;

(d) Prepare them to make substantive contributions to the ECE's Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4).

Specific regional activities

ESCAP. On the completion of the ongoing Project on Trade Facilitation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and of the UNDP-financed UNCTAD-executed ASEAN Trade Facilitation Project, workshops on trade facilitation at the national level would have already been organized in several ESCAP countries. Such workshops will be organized in the countries not already covered and will be repeated as required in the other countries.

ESCWA. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia will organize, in co-operation with ECE and UNCTAD/FALPRO, one regional seminar of one-week duration on trade facilitation methods and techniques, with a maximum number of 25 participants, including national representatives of both the public and private sectors (departments concerned with commerce, transport, Customs administration, statistics and data processing; chambers of commerce and industry and association of producers, exporters, carriers, forwarders etc.) and representatives of regional and subregional organizations (e.g., Council of Arab Economic Units, Gulf Co-operation Council, Arab Co-operation Council, Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture).

COMPONENT II. NETWORKS OF FACILITATION ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 4: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: ESTABLISH OR STRENGTHEN THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL FACILITATION BODIES, AND ASSIST THEM IN CARRYING OUT THEIR ACTIVITIES

Outputs

(a) Reports on existing national, subregional and regional facilitation mechanisms, together with requirements for institution building;

(b) National seminars dealing with problems encountered in the facilitation process.

General regional activities

(a) The Commissions will analyse the current situation in each country, and in subregional and regional organizations, as appropriate, with respect to institutional framework and capacity to undertake trade facilitation programmes;

(b) Seminars will be organized and presented at national, subregional or regional levels to support the establishment or strengthening of national, subregional and regional facilitation bodies.

Specific regional activities

ECA. The Economic Commission for Africa will establish a regional focal point within the Trade and Development Finance Division, with two regional advisers who will co-ordinate all facilitation activities and carry out technical assistance missions to countries and subregional organizations. Countries and subregional groupings will be assisted in establishing and/or strengthening facilitation focal points, which will act as counterparts of ECA's regional focal point. The ECA focal point will also act as a training centre for national experts and will provide the necessary equipment (hardware and software to be secured from project funds) for training purposes.

Subregional consultative committees will be established on facilitation within each of the subregional groupings (Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA)) and a regional consultative committee. Such committees will meet at least once a year to discuss subregional arrangements and co-operation in facilitation. The regional Committee will concentrate on the harmonization, trade and transport facilitation systems and practices between subregions and carry out work on the establishment of a regional network of trade facilitation and a regional transit system as part of the proposed African Economic Community.

ECE. A regional focal point will be established within the secretariat for co-ordination of existing facilitation bodies in the region and for assisting in the creation of such bodies in countries where they do not exist. In addition, the ECE regional focal point will be involved in the execution of objectives 2, 3, 5 and 7.

ECLAC. The focal-point staff of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will establish working relations with each facilitation body in the region; make available to them appropriate educational, organizational and procedural materials; and aid them in applying the general concepts of facilitation in their own national contexts. ECLAC's bimonthly bulletin "Facilitation of trade and transportion, Latin America" and the Caribbean "FAL Bulletin" will serve as an additional liaison with the national committees, as well as a general vehicle for disseminating public information concerning facilitation.

ESCAP. Assistance will be provided in:

(a) Setting up of effective national trade facilitation bodies where they do not exist and strengthening the existing ones, and also on the functioning of such bodies;

(b) Setting up subregional trade facilitation network for the developing Pacific island countries, which ultimately will be part of the overall ESCAP regional network.

ESCWA. The following activities are planned:

(a) Establishment of a regional focal point within the secretariat consisting of one expert and one regional adviser with overall and specific responsibilities for implementing project activities;

(b) Surveys or reports on existing trade facilitation mechanisms and institution building requirements: three case studies (Gulf Co-operation Council, Arab Co-operation Council, and other countries); regional/subregional mechanism and requirements;

(c) Technical assistance missions arranged through the regional focal point and delivered through the regional adviser to assist national authorities and regional bodies in:

(i) Analysis of the current situation in the field of trade formalities, procedures and documentation;

(ii) Formulation of proposals for improvement in current procedures and documentation;

(iii) Implementation of agreed facilitation measures;

(d) In co-operation with ECE and UNCTAD/FALPRO, one national workshop of two-weeks duration to train participants from national and regional/subregional entities on trade facilitation methods and techniques;

(e) The regional focal point (expert and regional adviser) to identify issues requiring specialized technical advice in such fields as Customs, port practices, transport and transit procedures, commercial practices, legal matters etc., and arrange to draw from expertise assigned to UNCTAD/FALPRO for such purposes.

OBJECTIVE 5: OPERATIONAL MECHANISMS; ESTABLISH REGIONAL MECHANISMS TO PROVIDE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL FACILITATION BODIES CAN EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND CARRY OUT CO-OPERATIVE EFFORTS

Outputs

(a) Regional meetings to establish the scope and framework of these mechanisms;

(b) Formal agreements among participating Governments in each region to set up and support the mechanisms.

Specific regional activities

ECE. Upon request from the regional facilitation focal points, the ECE focal point will provide assistance which might be required by the other commissions in establishing the regional mechanisms, and will participate in the regional meetings or seminars, as appropriate.

ECLAC. It is anticipated that the mechanism will consist of an association of national facilitation committees, without a formal secretariat, patterned on one of the following models: (a) the Meeting of Ministers of Public Works and Transport of the Southern Cone Countries, in which secretariat functions are rotated yearly among the respective ministries of the seven member countries; or (b) the Meeting of National Customs Directors of Latin America, Spain and Portugal, in which the Mexican Customs Administration provides secretariat functions but the presidency rotates yearly to the country that will host the next annual assembly. Subregional and regional integration agencies, such as the Andean Pact (JUNAC), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) will be encouraged to participate actively in setting up this mechanism.

ESCAP. ESCAP Regional Trade Facilitation Network, to be established by 1991, will be charged with the following functions:

(a) The ESCAP Trade Facilitation Network shall take appropriate measures to promote rationalization of trade procedures and documentation and the effective use for this purpose of electronic and other methods for automatic data processing and transmission, with a view to contributing towards the promotion of trade expansion for the countries in the region. In particular, it shall:

(i) Act as a focal point for trade facilitation efforts in the ESCAP region for the collection, collation and dissemination of information on trade facilitation matters,

(Note: In this context, whenever appropriate and justifiable and provided that information on trade facilitation measures undertaken by its membership is forthcoming, the secretariat shall bring out a regional trade facilitation newsletter);

(ii) Take appropriate steps to disseminate information and formulate consolidated response on any trade facilitation measure under consideration in an international forum and to provide inputs to the work in the international trade facilitation network, that is, the ECE Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4);

(iii) Monitor and co-ordinate the implementation of trade facilitation measures, developed and recommended for international application, in order to bring about harmonized and uniform application of such measures;

(iv) Develop a regional approach to common facilitation problems and a common methodology for thei solution;

(v) Promote the introduction and use of international standards and systems, such as EDIFACT and ASYCUDA;

(vi) Formulate plans and programmes for the promotion of agreed trade facilitation measures and for training of officials to implement trade facilitation measures;

(vii) Take appropriate steps leading to increased interaction and technical co-operation among countries of the ESCAP region in the field of trade facilitation;

(b) The ESCAP secretariat shall ensure appropriate working arrangements in the area of trade facilitation between the Network and UNCTAD/FALPRO and the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC);

(c) The ESCAP secretariat shall take steps required to foster close co-operation with other regional commissions of the United Nations, more particularly ECE, in the field of trade facilitation, and other organizations based in the region and involved in the field of trade facilitation and avoid any duplication of effort;

(d) The Network shall be a technical forum which will present its findings and recommendations to the Committee on Trade and, through the Committee, to the Commission;

(e) The meetings of the Network may be convened as and when necessary, at least once in every two years.

(Note: The International Trade and Tourism Division of ESCAP shall provide the secretarial services necessary for the effective functioning of the Network, which should form part of ESCAP activities in the field of trade facilitation.)

ESCWA. One regional seminar of one-week duration will be organized, with national representation from both the public and private sectors and from regional and subregional entities concerned with or involved in trade facilitation, as outlined under Objective 3. The seminar should produce a formal agreement among participating Governments and bodies to support a regional mechanism, which will provide a channel through which the national, regional and subregional facilitation bodies can exchange information and carry out co-operative efforts.

OBJECTIVE 6: EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION; PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRADE FACILITATION MEASURES AT NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL LEVELS

Outputs

(a) Reports identifying national, subregional and regional facilitation needs;

(b) Strategies and implementation programmes for the adoption of trade facilitation measures at national, subregional and regional levels;

(c) Recommendations to national, subregional and regional facilitation bodies regarding the implementation of general trade facilitation measures;

(d) Direct support to national, subregional and regional facilitation bodies, as required, for implementation of specific trade facilitation measures.

General regional activities

Technical co-operation missions will be carried out by regional focal-point staff, with collaboration by UNCTAD/FALPRO experts, as appropriate, aimed at assisting in:

(a) Identifying facilitation needs and technical assistance requirements;

(b) Preparing strategies and implementation programmes;

(c) Implementing general facilitation measures.

Specific regional activities

ECA. The Commission will carry out appraisal of transit agreements and transit systems in ECOWAS, ECCAS, PTA and organize in each of these communities one subregional seminar on applied trade facilitation in the light of subregional needs and programmes. These activities will be carried out in co-operation with ECE and UNCTAD/FALPRO.

Interregional activities

Technical co-operation missions will be carried out by experts in Customs, port practices, transport, commercial practices, legal matters etc. from UNCTAD/FALPRO - or, if appropriate, by drawing on expertise available in regional commissions or consultants from the region in question - in consultation with regional focal-point staff and in compliance with regional strategies, in order to assist national, subregional and regional facilitation bodies in implementing agreed facilitation measures.

COMPONENT III. EDIFACT PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVE 7. PROMOTE THE GENERALIZED USE OF EDIFACT AND ASSIST IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Outputs

Implementation of EDI in international trade and related services, using EDIFACT standards.

Global activities to be undertaken by ECE

ECE will:

(a) Make the EDIFACT data base, maintained within ECE, including the Trade Data Elements Directory (TDED) and the Trade Data Interchange Directory (TDID), available to the regional commissions; and will acquire or develop and test such software as may be necessary, and prepare appropriate supporting documentation, so that the other regional commissions can download the data base, both initially and for updating. A mechanism will be included to indicate the status of items contained in an update (whether additions, deletions or corrections to existing items) to facilitate their distribution by the regional commissions in developing areas to actual and potential EDIFACT users;

(b) Acquire or develop and test appropriate software for converting internal EDI files into EDIFACT messages and vice versa;

(c) Prepare EDIFACT implementation manuals;

(d) Develop a standard framework for the preparation of EDIFACT pilot projects;

(e) Participate in regional, subregional or national seminars organized by the other commissions and in the installation of EDIFACT in selected pilot sites.

General regional activities

The regional commissions will:

(a) Process and disseminate information gathered at the regional level on telecommunications facilities and commercial network services, and develop appropriate procedures for making these services available to potential users;

(b) In co-operation with ECE, organize regional, subregional or national seminars, workshops and training programmes. To the extent possible, transnational corporations that employ EDI in their operations will be asked to collaborate. The first regional seminar in each region should aim at introducing EDIFACT and identifying potential trainees and pilot sites for possible subsequent installation;

(c) In co-operation with ECE, instal EDIFACT in selected pilot sites in the public as well as the private sector. Working through national facilitation bodies, regional focal-point staff will make contact with candidate sites interested in using EDI, in order to aid them in applying EDIFACT standards. In countries that are, or have been, participating in UNCTAD's ASYCUDA project for the computerization of national Customs procedures, the expertise developed by this project will also be tapped;

(d) Promote the use of ASYCUDA as a tool for implementing EDIFACT in Customs, transport and port operations in those countries that have not already installed ASYCUDA.

Specific regional activities

ECA. The commission will carry out pilot projects in two countries or more, in co-operation with telecommunications corporations, that would provide public facilities (computer centres) to trading firms interested in EDI exchanges in EDIFACT format to subsequently evaluate these pilot projects with a view to extending their experiences to other African countries.

ECLAC. The commission will promote the appointment of an EDIFACT rapporteur for Latin America and the Caribbean, together with the appropriate advisory and support team. At this point, it is not clear that the incentive for applying EDI will have developed sufficiently in this region during the life of the project to make it feasible to appoint a rapporteur who would be in a position to participate beyond the life of the project in the work of ECE's Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) and its subsidiary Meeting of Experts on Data Elements and Automatic Data Interchange (GE.1). However, the possibility will be explored with the national facilitation bodies in an attempt to achieve consensus both on the desirability of such an appointment and on the most appropriate individual to carry out this function.

COMPONENT IV. REGIONAL PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL FACILITATION WORK

OBJECTIVE 8. ENSURE PARTICIPATION BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DEVELOPING REGIONS IN THE WORK OF ECE'S WORKING PARTY ON FACILITATION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE PROCEDURES (WP.4)

Outputs

Increased awareness by working party members of the special problems and concerns of the developing regions.

General regional activities

The commission will:

(a) Prepare contributions (based on findings from meetings, studies and technical missions) to be submitted to WP.4;

(b) Bring representatives from national facilitation bodies in the developing regions to meetings of WP.4 and its subsidiary groups, and provide them with opportune briefings about the agenda of the sessions they will attend.

Specific regional activities

ECE. The focal-point staff will organize, in co-operation with UNCTAD/FALPRO, briefing and debriefing sessions for experts participating in the sessions of WP.4 and its Meeting of Experts.

ESCAP. In consultation with and under the guidance of ESCAP's Regional Trade Facilitation Network, ESCAP will make necessary and appropriate arrangements to ensure its participation in the work of WP.4 and its Meeting of Experts.

E. UNDP and other funding agencies inputs

UNDP and other funding agencies are being requested to finance the following:

(a) Project personnel, together with their travel and per diem;

(b) Short-term consultants, together with their travel and per diem;

(c) Preparation, processing and distribution of training materials and videos;

(d) Acquisition or development of software for downloading the EDIFACT data base, and for converting internal EDI files into EDIFACT messages and vice versa;

(e) Travel and per diem for regional participation in the work of WP.4.

F. Risks

One significant risk would be an incomplete or delayed implementation by the developing countries of the recommended facilitation techniques and procedures. However, in view of the importance they attach to improving the competitiveness of their foreign trade, it appears likely that few if any countries would ignore such recommendations. Failure of national facilitation bodies to make proper use of project outputs will constitute a more direct risk, which will be minimized through the continuing contacts with these bodies maintained by focal-point personnel in the regional commissions and by UNCTAD/FALPRO experts.

A calculated risk associated with EDIFACT promotion in the developing regions, which must be accepted, is that training in this area given to staff of governmental offices in computer-related fields will create a real likelihood that the best qualified personnel will be induced to relocate in the private sector. To the extent that such movement is associated with greater incentives for this sector to apply EDI and EDIFACT, however, it may in fact be considered a positive output of the project, rather than a failure.

II. Review and reporting

At the end of each year, a report will be prepared summarizing the progress of the project to date. Representatives of the five regional economic commissions, UNCTAD and UNDP will then meet to review the report and make such adjustments to the work programme as may be required.

V. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF ILLEGAL TRAFFIC IN TOXIC AND DANGEROUS PRODUCTS AND WASTES

167. General Assembly resolution 44/226 calls for each regional commission to contribute to the prevention of the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes by monitoring and making regional assessments of this illegal traffic and its environmental and health implications, on a continuing basis, in each region, and to report to the Economic and Social Council on progress made in this regard. During the meeting of the Task Force on Environment, consisting of representatives of regional commissions and UNEP under the chairmanship of the office of the Director General, held at Geneva on 22-23 March 1990, the implementation of this resolution was discussed. The representatives of the regional commissions were of the view that a meaningful implementation of the mandate given to their commissions involved a tremendous task and that they would face problems in implementing that resolution within existing resources. As a first step, regional commissions might address member Governments in order to obtain information on traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes. In that connection, and in order to avoid duplication, the representatives discussed co-ordination of their efforts with the UNEP representatives at the meeting, including the Director, International Register for Potentially Toxic Chemicals/Programme Activity Centre (IRPTC/PAC). The representatives were also informed of the work of the interim secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, recently set up by UNEP.

A. Economic Commission for Europe

168. In his note to the Commission at its forty-fifth session on resolutions bearing on the work of the Commission adopted by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, the Executive Secretary of ECE drew attention to Assembly resolution 44/226. Regarding the request that each regional commission should contribute to the prevention of the illegal traffic by monitoring and making regional assessments of illegal traffic on a continuing basis, he commented that to date ECE work had been limited to facilitating the safe transport of dangerous goods, including wastes.

169. In paragraph 2 of the resolution the Assembly had also requested the regional commissions to interact among themselves, and in co-operation with UNEP, with a view to maintaining efficient and co-ordinated monitoring and assessment of the illegal traffic.

170. The Executive Secretary stated in his note that the regional commissions had begun a series of consultations with UNEP on a range of environmental issues, including traffic in and disposal, control and transboundary movements of toxic and dangerous products and wastes.

171. The Commission took note of resolution 44/226 at its forty-fifth session.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

172. ESCAP considered that the tasks entrusted to it under resolution 44/226 were gigantic. It would not be possible, utilizing the existing resources, to undertake activities to fulfil the mandate. At present ESCAP had no specific ongoing activities directly addressing the problems referred to in the resolution. However, industrial pollution control guidelines had been completed for several large- and small-scale industries, some of which were potentially toxic. Currently, ESCAP was developing guidelines for the mitigation of pollution of coastal waters from hazardous industrial wastes located in the Eastern Seaboard Development area bordering the Gulf of Thailand. The guidelines would affect the following industries: tantalum, VCM-PVC, PTA-DMT polyester, styrene and ABS, titanium dioxide and hydrogen peroxide.

173. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP would shortly address member Governments in the region to seek their co-operation in obtaining information on legal and illegal trade in toxic wastes and hazardous goods and in keeping the secretariat informed of the status of hazardous wastes movement and generation. ESCAP was also seeking funding support from all sources to implement activities in that field. A project document on the development of methodologies, guidelines and human resources for hazardous waste management in the developing countries of the ESCAP region had been prepared for extrabudgetary funding. In addition, for the 1992-1993 programme budget, a programme element on management of toxic and hazardous wastes and products had been proposed in the outline recently submitted. The secretariat of ESCAP intended to implement its programme of work on toxic and hazardous waste management in co-operation with UNEP and UNIDO.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

174. ECLAC considered that it would be very difficult to comply in a significant manner, using available existing resources, with the mandate of General Assembly resolution 44/226. The setting up of a regional system for the monitoring and assessment of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes (ITTDPW) would require the development of instruments and procedures for such activity, as well as mobilization and provision of support to national Governments to effectively co-operate in the implementation of a regular monitoring and assessment system. ECLAC could not at present undertake the execution of the described activities within existing regular budget resources.

175. It was stated that the problem of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes was of great relevance in the region. Several countries of the region, particularly in Central America and the Pacific basin in South America, had been involved in attempts to illegally introduce or dispose of toxic products and wastes in their territories, as a consequence of which were recognized the existence of important policy and legal loopholes that had encouraged the occurrence of those events. The preoccupation of national Governments with this problem had been indicated also in several regional meetings organized with ECLAC participation. Thus, the theme had been brought up in the Seminar on Economic and Environmental Aspects of Industrial Waste Management, held at Buenos Aires in

September 1987, organized by ECLAC and the Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft (Federal Republic of Germany); and in the Regional Workshop on Management of Dangerous Wastes in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Mexico City in August 1988, organized by ECLAC, UNEP, and the Governments of Mexico and the Federal Republic of Germany.

176. ECLAC considered that the few events recorded of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes in the region did not reflect the actual magnitude of the problem. Facing the need to optimize the use of its resources, ECLAC's work had focused, as a priority, on developing activities to support the formulation of policies in the wider field of overall waste management. That approach was based on the principle that a requisite for taking action in a particular area of waste management was the existence of coherent and realistic national policies. So far, those activities had been executed almost entirely with extrabudgetary resources. ECLAC was about to start a regional project on policies for the management of industrial and urban wastes with funding from the Federal Republic of Germany. It was intended that the project would launch the theme of illegal traffic in those substances within the global framework of waste management.

177. ECLAC was also touching certain aspects of toxic waste management in the context of its co-operative work with UNEP. Again, that work relied on UNEP funding channeled through projects, the last of which was currently being negotiated.

178. Based on the above, ECLAC was studying the best and most meaningful ways of approaching national Governments to initiate certain activities towards the implementation of resolution 44/226.

D. Economic Commission for Africa

179. Africa was brought into the limelight of the trade in hazardous and toxic waste in 1988 with the Koko Port scandal, when a Nigerian citizen agreed to rent his backyard to an Italian businessman for $100 a month to store 8,000 drums of hazardous wastes, including highly toxic PCBs. That discovery was made after Nigeria had taken the initiative to lead the campaign against the dumping of wastes in Africa, prompting the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to adopt a resolution which, among other things, declared the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in Africa to be a crime against Africa and the African people (CM/Res.1153 (XLVIII). This was followed by the eleventh summit, in 1988, of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) when toxic waste was placed as one of the major agenda items. Representatives reaffirmed the OAU resolution and prohibited the importation of any hazardous wastes into the ECOWAS area. Some member States also did the same for their respective countries.

180. Although the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movement and Disposal of all Types of Hazardous Wastes was a good beginning towards the restriction of the movement of and illegal traffic in dangerous wastes, African countries strongly felt that the Convention was not strong enough to protect them

from the ventures of those intending to turn Africa into a dumping ground for hazardous and toxic wastes. The Convention, they argued, had treated those substances as any other commodity that could be negotiated for. Consequently, by OAU resolution CM/Res.1225(L) of July 1989, they decided to draw up, with the assistance of ECA, their own convention, which would fill in the gaps left by the Basel Convention . The proposed African convention had adopted the definitions of Basel and had extended it to ban all imports into Africa of wastes, including nuclear wastes. The signing of this OAU Convention on the Transboundary Movement and Disposal of all Forms of Hazardous Wastes in Africa was due to be signed by member States during the Pan-African Co-ordinating Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development, scheduled to be held at Bamako, Mali, in June 1990.

181. In order to keep abreast of developments in the Africa region, ECA had included hazardous and toxic waste monitoring in its regular work programme and would be reporting to its Conference of Ministers on the situation in 1991 and, at the same time, would develop guidelines that would be discussed and presented to member States for adoption in the course of that year. Programme activity was also geared towards the implementation of resolution 44/226 on the matter.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

182. ESCWA felt that, owing to existing resource constraints within the secretariat, it would be difficult to implement Part I of resolution 44/226, particularly the monitoring and assessment of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes in the region. However, the Commission had recently discussed the subject with UNEP and was expecting support from it to implement the above resolution.

F. Conclusion

183. Interregional co-operation in the monitoring and assessment of the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes can effectively be done only within the context of existing conventions and agreements. This presupposes that each region shall develop its framework within which the provisions of the Basel Convention would be implemented, as Africa is about to do in drafting the African Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements and Disposal of All Types of Hazardous Wastes. This type of Convention will cater for regional priorities and set the framework for interregional co-operation in monitoring and assessing the illegal movement of these dangerous wastes.

184. To institutionalize the monitoring of the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes, each regional commission must have an operational unit that will carry out the following tasks:

(a) Develop appropriate technical guidelines for monitoring and assessing the impact of the movement of all dangerous products, including illegal traffic in them;

(b) Collect data on the basic infrastructure for the illegal traffic of these wastes and products; these data and information should include state of export, state of possible import and the nature of the dangerous product(s) or toxic wastes;

(c) Carry out studies on the nature and possible impact of these wastes on human health and the environment;

(d) Disseminate all the information to the other regions, including information on the movement of all actual or possible transporters that might be engaged in promoting such activities;

(e) Assist member States in developing national policies, legislation and administrative mechanisms for monitoring this illegal traffic;

(f) Encourage the development or transfer of technology that will facilitate monitoring and assessment activities.

185. On receipt of related information the operational unit should immediately inform the other regional entities, who would, in turn, inform the units of their secretariats charged with the matter, or, where one does not exist, the secretariat of the Basel Convention. The information should also be transmitted to the States of export and of possible import. The regions would then monitor the movement of such carriers that are engaged in the illegal traffic, with the assistance of the competent agency of the United Nations or other international organizations carrying out similar activities in monitoring such movements.

186. Since the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes is of necessity carried out either by land, sea or air transport, the regional commissions should ensure that all regional agreements relating to transportation by these modes include clauses dealing with the illegal movement of these products and wastes. Agreements binding countries in subregional groupings should also include clauses on the control or prohibition of these practices.

187. What has been pointed out above has very heavy resource implications considering the nature of the problem. Although resolution 44/226 states that these activities should be carried out "within existing resources", it would be unrealistic not to consider these implications, bearing in mind the fact that all the commissions that are the focus of this illegal traffic, have extremely limited resources for the execution of their environment programmes. Illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes, as is well known, is very similar to the traffic in illegal drugs like cocaine. The information network must be very well developed and effective. The operational units involved must be made up of people who are not only qualified to do the job but must also be dedicated to it. Final resources must also be readily available for information and data collection and dissemination. If this is not the situation, the toxic waste rogues will slip through the monitoring network.

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REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Section I.B.3

Economic Commission for Africa resolution 682 (XXV) should be moved to section I.A.2.

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* E/1990/92.

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REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Matters calling for action by the Council

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. During the forty-sixth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Government of the Republic of Korea offered to hold the forty-seventh session of the Commission at Seoul and agreed to bear all responsibility for the additional administrative, logistical and financial expenditure involved. The Commission unanimously decided to hold its forty-seventh session at Seoul, in accordance with paragraph 4 (f) of General Assembly resolution 40/243, subject to the approval of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

2. In the consideration of the secretariat's input into the new international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, the Commission decided that a comprehensive approach to development, in which the

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* E/1990/92.

interrelated components of economic growth, social development and environmental protection were fully integrated, should form the basis of such a strategy at the regional level, keeping in view the topic of international economic co-operation for the revitalization of the economic growth and development of the developing countries.

3. With regard to the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, 1/ the Commission, noting with deep concern that it had failed to achieve its main targets, urged the international community to accelerate its efforts in support of the least developed countries to enable them to sustain their growth and development. In that respect, the Commission noted with particular interest the various restructuring measures adopted by the Governments of the least developed countries to achieve greater flexibility and resilience in the face of constantly changing internal and external circumstances. The Commission welcomed the convening of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Paris in September 1990, and adopted resolution 46/4 on the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in which it requested the Executive Secretary to take appropriate measures, within available resources, for the review, follow-up and monitoring of the plan of action for the 1990s for the least developed countries at the regional level, and invited donors to support the secretariat in the implementation of the action plan. It also adopted resolution 46/7 on the promotion of foreign investment in the least developed countries of the Asia and the Pacific region, and resolution 46/8 on technical and economic co-operation among developing countries for the least developed, land-locked and island developing countries.

4. In considering the theme topic of the forty-sixth session, "Challenges and opportunities of restructuring the developing ESCAP economies in the 1990s", the Commission generally endorsed the main focus of the secretariat study relating to regional co-operation as a catalyst for the economic restructuring efforts of the developing ESCAP region. The Commission agreed on the need for enhanced and more broad-based regional co-operation efforts in the region through, inter alia, expanded intraregional trade and investment flows, and on the need to facilitate economic restructuring to sustain the process of growth and modernization in the developing economies of the region. In this context, taking into account the various views expressed on the secretariat proposal to establish an ESCAP council for regional economic co-operation, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to take measures to elaborate the objectives and terms of reference of the proposed council, to consult further with members and associate members with a view to giving further impetus to regional co-operation based on expanded restructuring in the region and to convene an intergovernmental meeting, as and when necessary, to develop a regional perspective on the objectives, scope and the organizational and operational framework of further co-operative action in the context of new developments and emerging challenges. The Commission recommended that the theme for the next session of the Commission should focus on industrial restructuring in Asia and the Pacific, in particular with a view to promoting regional co-operation.

5. The Commission endorsed the preparatory measures for the forthcoming regional Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and decided that its title should be changed to "Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific". The Commission stressed the importance of the follow-up of the Conference, and recommended that the realities with respect to the environmental problems of the region be adequately reflected. The Commission urged the countries of the region to assist the secretariat in its contribution to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/226 of 22 December 1989 on the monitoring of hazardous and toxic products and wastes and their transboundary movement for the preparation of the report to the Economic and Social Council.

6. Deeply concerned at the alarming rate of urbanization in the Asian and Pacific region, the Commission adopted resolution 46/2 on urbanization strategies in the ESCAP region - towards environmentally sound and sustainable development and management of urban areas, requesting the Executive Secretary to prepare a report on the state of urbanization in the region and to develop a regional plan of action to assist members and associate members in their efforts to deal with the social, environmental and other problems associated with urbanization. In the same resolution, it was decided to convene in 1992 a regional conference, subject to the availability of resources, to address these issues.

7. The Commission also adopted resolution 46/6 on the integration of women in all aspects of development and decided that "women in development" should be considered as the theme topic at one of its future sessions. It requested the Executive Secretary to take measures, including the convening in 1993 of a regional intergovernmental meeting on women in development, to review progress achieved in Asia and the Pacific with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 2/ and the regional preparatory work for the world conference on women to be convened in 1995 and, subject to available resources, also to undertake an analytical report, formulate regional action proposals for consideration of the intergovernmental meeting and strengthen the programme on women through the provision of an additional regular budget post. It also adopted resolution 46/5 on the regional follow-up of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, and decided to convene a meeting of senior officials in 1990 to formulate the regional programme of action in support of education for all in the ESCAP region.

8. In its resolution 46/1 on strengthening the population activities of the Commission in the 1990s, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to convey to the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the Asian Development Bank the desire of the Commission for additional resources in support of its population programme within existing budget levels. In addition, the Commission requested the active participation of members and associate members of ESCAP for the upcoming Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in 1992, as well as the international meeting on population in 1994.

9. In endorsing the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, the Commission expressed the view that because of the diversity in the levels of and policies on economic, social and technological development among the countries of the region,

their priorities in different sectors and the type of assistance they required varied markedly. While stressing the basic priority to promote regional and intercountry co-operation and interdisciplinary approaches to complex development issues, the Commission decided that, for the consideration of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its resumed thirtieth session in September 1990, nine subprogrammes should be proposed as high priority in order to comply with existing programme planning rules of the United Nations. The Commission adopted resolution 46/3 on the priorities and operation of the Commission in which it urged members and associate members to address, on a continuing basis, priorities for the work programmes emerging from their changing needs, and requested the Executive Secretary to continue with his efforts to improve the administrative and operational functioning of the secretariat and, towards that goal, to continue to facilitate regular consultations and interaction between the members and the secretariat to ensure effective implementation of the work programme.

10. In considering the report of the Executive Secretary, in which an assessment of the effectiveness of the Commission's conference structure is presented, the Commission reconfirmed its view that its session should continue to be held annually for the duration of eight to nine working days. With regard to the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission, it endorsed the proposal of the Executive Secretary that the Commission postpone the overall review of the conference structure until the forty-seventh session, and that an in-depth study on the intergovernmental subsidiary structure be conducted by the secretariat, with input from a group of Eminent Persons, on the basis of which the proposals should be submitted to that session for its consideration.

Notes

1/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 1-14 September 1981 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.8), part I, sect. A.

2/ See Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.